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THE WORLD'S AWAKENING

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By

NAVARCHUS

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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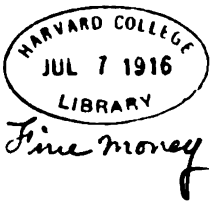

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TO THE READER

WHEN the great war came, it came with all the startling suddenness of an unexpected tornado.

For long years commercial competition had apparently taken the place of rivalry in armaments, the expansion of which had received a check consequent on the self-denying ordinance accepted by all the Great Powers forming the Third Peace Convention at the Hague.

New ways had been opened up for commerce by the Cape-to-Cairo railway, by the new line down the Euphrates Valley to the Persian Gulf, and above all by the opening of the Panama Canal and the awakening of China under the skilful hands of Japan.

China had at first drawn largely on the markets of America and Europe for railway plant and machinery in general; but Japan herself had soon absorbed this new source of wealth so adjacent to her, and now was competing keenly with the "White Powers" for the mastery of trade in the Far East, mid-Asia, and indeed the entire Pacific region.

Her flag now flew in every port of that great ocean,

and in the more important shipping centres of Europe and the Americas.

During the alliance with England, Australia had had to admit the Japanese immigrants in such great numbers that they soon had formed themselves into exceedingly powerful communities in the mercantile centres of the Commonwealth, in her mining districts, and along the pearling coast, ousting even the Chinese from predominance in the restaurants, the small trades and certain financial undertakings.

It was this rapidly increasing trade rivalry in the Pacific and throughout India and Eastern Asia that had strongly influenced the British Government against renewal of the alliance with the Island Empire ; also the fact that in Australia the feeling against the Japanese as immigrants and residents had culminated in the renewed agitation for a " white " Australia, together with much energetic discussion about " cutting the painter " if the British Government persisted in allowing the right of its former ally to an open door into the Commonwealth.

But closing the " door " might have stirred up retaliation of a very serious and far-reaching order and might have brought about the shutting of the open door in China ; and Britain's commercial interests in the Far East were still worth too much for that to be seriously contemplated by practical politicians and men of business.

The United States also had felt severely the

effects of the rising commercial power of the East.

Her trade was waning throughout China as well as Japan; and the influx of low-wage, manual workers from Japan throughout the south-western States had alarmed the labour caucuses. In Manila there was now a large and wealthy colony of Japanese, also at Guam, and in especial at Honolulu. At this American base, it may be said, that even as far back as before the Russo-Japanese war there had been a so-called "American" militia regiment recruited almost entirely among the local Japanese.

This, then, was the general aspect of world politics concerning the nations that became involved in the world hostilities of 1920.

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THE FIRST BOOK

CHAPTER I

THE MILLS OF DESTINY

§ I

WHEN Mr. John Stanhope Marlborough, on the forenoon of June 1, 1920, entered his private secretary's room with his characteristic rush, the lapels of his frock coat flying back and its skirts streaming out behind him, No. 10 Downing Street was just about to get Fate's first premonitory notes.

It was in blissful ignorance that the portents were to be mis-read.

The call bell of the telephone standing on the writing table was still trilling noisily. With an exclamation of annoyance the secretary, rising as the Prime Minister entered, shoved aside the papers lying before him, and took up the microphone.

"One moment, sir," said Savill apologetically, bending across the table to hand Mr. Marlborough the slips on which he had been engaged. "These are your notes extended, sir, for the Peace Congress this afternoon."

"Yes . . . yes. . . . Oh, capital! I see you mention these unhealthy symptoms in Japan. . . . Very wise! I had overlooked them when dictating."

"I want Mr. Savill," echoed stridently into the

secretary's ear. "Oh, it's you, Mr. Savill. I am Hannay, of Statham & Tucketts. Mr. Statham will be very glad if you can slip down at once, and instruct us on selling that stock your father writes us about. . . . No, not to delay; to come down at once. . . . Well, we are just getting private information, the Deutsche Bank group are starting to sell some large parcels of Consols and India Threes."

Savill's eye rested unconsciously, first on the Prime Minister perusing his speech, and then on the Exchequer documents filling the pigeon-holed section of the bookcase at the other side of the room.

"What has started them?" was his rejoinder, in a voice that made Mr. Marlborough look up at him.

"We don't know," jangled up from Throgmorton Street in the nasal voice of the wire. "As I speak we hear further they are also selling out holdings of Commonwealth stocks. . . . Quite unaccountable! Rather similar to what happened in the Spring, when you folks introduced the Works and Estates Appropriation Bill. Same fears, perhaps, among Continental holders. Have you any knowledge? Perhaps indiscreet asking you, though."

Savill shifted about uneasily.

A feeling of gloom had instantly taken him. That on this bright day of all days for Britain's Prime Minister, a crowning day for the work of the Peace Congresses, nay, for the work of the Country herself, Fate should appear to be thrusting forward some sinister gage—it was intolerable!

Vain surmises pursued themselves through his head. He stared before him, out at the window. Glowing sunshine bathed the old historic street in its merciless

rays, revealing every detail of the carvings in stone on the wall opposite. A party of tourists passed by, scanning No. 10 with inquisitive eye. Up and down the further pavement a police inspector and sergeant were slowly sauntering.

"No, I know of nothing—absolutely nothing!" he truthfully replied. "I'll come down as soon as possible. Their action is strange."

"Yes, inconceivably strange! We are calling up both Vienna and Paris, and hope to get some kind of explanation. Mr. Statham 'll wait in to see you, then. Good-bye."

Savill rang off, and readjusted the receiver.

"Nothing serious, I hope?" asked Mr. Marlborough in his impulsive sympathetic manner, marking the secretary's worried look.

"I think not, sir. Just got the information, though, Berlin is selling large parcels of Consols, India Threes, and Commonwealth stocks. Rather inexplicable! The Stock Exchange seemed quiet enough yesterday."

But this was what Mr. Marlborough replied, with an ironical grimace to the present and future :—

"Hysterics! Hysterics! All due, without doubt, to the Continental dealer getting nervous again at the success of our progressive home policy as shown in the Works and Estates Appropriation Bill. It'll do some of us Britons a good turn!"

The Prime Minister still retained a little of the alertness and vivacity of his younger days, when he had been known to the world of politicians as "The Youth." But his full face with the strong, rounded jaws and whimsical, heavily-lidded eyes, the slightly up-turned nose and firm truculent mouth—that had led the wits of the masses to nickname him the "Pug"—now had

a lack of life, of healthiness, that belied his breezy personal manner.

"I shall go straight from here, Savill, to the Conference at the County Council Hall. You had better look sharp if you are going down to the City before looking in there to hear our opening speeches. About this offer of Everitt's constituency? Ought you not to see your father personally? Run down by the midnight train if you desire."

"Thanks, sir! That will be better than writing him further on the matter. He has fallen in with the proposal, and is arranging about settlements so as to secure a separate income for me. But—I do hope my brother's unpleasantness at the Admiralty may not make bother for me so far as standing for a seat is concerned."

"Oh, Captain Savill and his submarines? A chimera of his! He certainly has indulged in a stupid little tragedy, trying to force the hand of the Board on the matter of his reports. His career in the Service has undoubtedly been brought to an abrupt ending now. The recommendations of the Committee on submarine designs are to be issued at once and the business cleared up. Meantime, I trust, he remains silent and passive. . . . No! What the bye-election will turn upon is our Works and Estates Appropriation Bill, and, perhaps this peremptory demand sprung on us this morning by the Bengal Representative Chambers for control over all their civil service, magistracy and police."

"The National Labour Party is strong on that," Savill noted in a significant voice. "But these threats of the Baboos are foolishness."

"I think so. As you say, the Party may hold the

Government to a meticulous consistency on this Bengal Question. . . . Too many people mistake the hustings for the witness box. They really think I am an encyclopaedia on all I have been favourable to since I entered politics. Ridiculous!"

The irritation to be traced in the Premier's peculiar, somewhat lisping, intonation, surprised Lesley, and caused him to look closely at him.

As Mr. Marlborough turned to the door, the notes for his opening speech in Peace Congress tightly gripped in his right hand, it came to his secretary that he did not look well. His complexion was rather sickly; there was a slight halt in his rapid utterance, and its usual gay and brilliant vivacity had lapsed into jerky mediocrity. Age indeed seemed to have suddenly fallen upon him. His slight stoop was now no mere quaint affectation stereotyped into a mannerism.

"Worry over this Appropriations Bill, and a touch of the liver, I should say," murmured Savill, preparing to go out. "A pity he's not up to the mark. If ever a man has put the crown on his own career he does it to-day with this fourth Peace Congress!"

Perhaps, however, the builder himself had already entertained doubts as to the stability of the forthcoming coping-stone, nay, of the entire structure supporting it. By the sanguine, peace on earth is often mistaken for goodwill among men!

Outside, along Whitehall, the midday heat was painfully oppressive: it seemed to rise off the pavement and street in stifling, red-hot waves. Not a breath of wind cooled the sultry atmosphere. Ceaseless as ever, and even thicker than of old, the traffic streamed up and down to Charing Cross and Westminster. Many of the motor omnibuses and open coaches and

other vehicles flew flags and little pennants in honour of the opening of the auspicious Peace Congress, and the Government Buildings and some London County offices still retained at Spring Gardens were similarly decorated. But very few of the business houses towards Trafalgar Square showed any joyous display.

A faint quizzical smile passed over the secretary's face as, standing at the top of Downing Street, he observed this.

"Hum!" he ejaculated. "Well, John Bull, business man, might have shown disapproval of his Government's nonmilitarism in a less jaundiced fashion!"

Hailing an electric hansom, Savill gave his stockbroker's address and jumped in.

It came to him, though, as he was whirled noiselessly along the crowded Strand that he ought to have given a word or two to the Foreign Office and the Exchequer officials as to the unexpected turn on the Berlin Bourse.

With a shrug of his shoulders he dismissed the notion.

Since Britain's striking reductions in her active military forces towards the furtherance of the social welfare of her workers and the peace of the world, the permanent heads in both of these States Departments had been deemed, in the phrasing of Mr. B. C. Stodge, Trades-Unionist M.P. and Minister of Trades, "Too prone in routing out any mares' nests roosting among the Governments abroad!"

"Hysterics, as Mr. Marlborough says. And quite too hysterical a proceeding for me!" quoth Savill to himself, leaning back more comfortably on the ample deep-cushioned seat, to watch with the approval of an expert motorist his driver cut in ahead of the string

of vehicles before them, and pass Wellington Street, crossing before the policeman's arm went up and the block began.

Yet if Savill had done so, officialism might have been prepared, even ever so little, for the news that was soon to thrill the two hemispheres—the news that was to kindle the holocaust of War.

§ 2

Sparse in figure, narrow-chested, with his aggressive snubnose and deep blue-grey eyes, stubborn chin and kindly mouth—sporadic features, Mr. Savill, senior, was wont to aver, pointing in corroboration to two of the family portraits lining the north gallery wall, "Turncoat Savill, Recusant and subsequently Roundhead," and his great-grand-nephew, John Torrington Savill, a noted macaroni and virulent Jacobin—Lesley Savill was the only member of his family and connexion that had a decided bias towards politics and political life. His father had hit on the truth when terming him a "sport." Lesley, like his political forbears in the flesh, was like them also in the spirit—of somewhat revolutionary tendencies.

Labour socialism—the adroit advocacy of which in many a stormy scene in the Union at Oxford, still a stronghold of orthodoxy and staunch conservatism, had brought him his first meed of repute as a budding champion of its aims—had not estranged him from his family, though it was wholly against their political convictions.

Indeed, to an onlooker, intimate with the Savills, they set forth in a vivid and marked fashion a county

family's vicissitudes in that decade of change and counterchange.

Mr. Savill, a well-known Essex squire, had married early, and now in the middle life was anxiously watching his sons and daughters make their way in a world that was now so full of changes. To each had he given encouragement and aid to follow his or her individual bent. His was a sanely-poised mind, impartial to the creeds of the classes and masses, and looking only for the welfare and future of the Country.

Of his two eldest sons, Arthur and James, both holding the King's Commission, one on land and one on sea, the former, a major in the Indian Staff Corps, on half-pay consequent on the granting of Home Rule to Bengal and the reduction of our Indian forces, was living on his meagre income at San Sebastian; while the latter, James, had now attained the rank of captain (S.B.), and was senior officer commanding the Harwich division of submarines. The third, Walter, an electrical and general engineer, had started business at Sydney to avoid labour complications and exactions at home, for Australia had already solved such questions after much unnecessary and protracted harassment, political and commercial; while Lesley, the youngest, after a distinguished University career, had, thanks to his talents and the influence of a friend, been appointed private secretary to the leader of the National Labour Party, John Stanhope Marlborough, who, on the re-organization of the Ministry, had found himself at its head.

Of Mr. Savill's two daughters, the elder, Winifred, had entered the lists of journalism, and was now the managing editor of the London edition of the New York *Suffrage*; and the other, married to Mr. Caleb

Dreischer, a partner in the New York, Panama, and Australian Shipping Company, spent much time with her father at Winsted Hall, south-east Essex, since the death of Mrs. Savill in 1918.

§ 3

As Lesley was passing the Law Courts it was the shouting of a flying newsboy, followed by his mates, the *Suffrage* news-bill, 'Sensational Disclosures at Whitehall,' waving in their hands, that hurled him back into his brother's 'stupid little tragedy.'

Stopping the hansom, he threw the nearest urchin a sixpence, and snatched away a copy of the paper. He tore it open, but for a moment or two he could not find the news. Then he turned to the stop-press column, and there it was in full publicity :—

SENSATIONAL DISCLOSURES AT WHITEHALL.

DANGER-TRAP SUBMARINES.

> A prominent submarine naval officer with a view to the full publicity of a court-martial, so it is stated in a well-informed quarter, will take a most momentous step, consequent on the Admiralty refusing to act upon his reports concerning grave defects in two classes of British submarines. He pronounces that they are 'nothing more than death-traps or coffin-ships.' The Sea Lords, it is rumoured, at last contemplate taking a firm stand on the question.

Lesley stared at the paragraph ; its words bit into his brain, but he was so dumbfounded he could hardly

see them. Controlling himself he re-read them, slowly, deliberately, as if he would fathom the prejudicial consequences to himself of the court-martial and disclosures, whether or not James proved the latter to be irrefutable facts. . . . One brother seeking election on the merits of the Ministry in power: the other, elder, and of well-known repute as an officer expert in his work, compelling the attention of the nation to a most drastic indictment of the government. . . .

In the stress of work that morning, fortified by his implicit confidence in Mr. Marlborough's manipulation of the crisis, its reality had not come home to Lesley. Now it appalled him. This damning inconsistency in family views struck him like a blow, shattering his day dreams of entering political life.

With a curse he crushed the newspaper between his hands. The *Suffrage*, too—Winnie's paper! and so "imperialistic"—so militant. Had Jim deliberately informed her, in order to force the matter before the nation?

Then suddenly he became aware that a small crowd of loafers and street vendors, passing remarks and staring inquisitively at him, was gathering on the kerb alongside, and his driver was asking for orders.

"Yes, drive on," he replied. "Quick as you like. Stop at the *Suffrage* office, Fleet Street."

Dismay, exasperation, anger, took him in turn, and left him a prey to mental acerbities. A sense of duty to Mr. Marlborough assailed him. Bitterly he reproached himself for having made light of Jim's strictures. If he had only sufficiently weighed the gravity of the situation, then his and his father's persuasion might have stayed publicity till at least some preparation had been made to meet and counteract it

MEETING OF THE PEACE CONGRESS.
BENGAL DEMANDS HER RIGHTS.

In Fleet Street the placards of the *Daily News* noon edition, stuck up in its office windows at the corner of Bouverie Street, caught his eye; and, on taking in the appropriate juxtaposition of the "heads," a momentary grimace passed over his face. Yet again mortification and wounded self-pride assailed him. To think that he had been ignorant, up to the last moment, of what had been going on in his own family!

From Hind Court and down to Ludgate Circus stretched a long trail of vehicles, filtering slowly city-ward through the cross traffic of Farringdon and Bridge Streets. Savill's driver steered close to the pavement, and slowed down in its rear.

Of the many projects taken in hand by the London County Council, their Board of Traffic was proving to be among the most unsuccessful. Although, through the London Trades and Machinery Rating Bill, one of the last passed by the previous Liberal Ministry, the capital of the British Empire had practically ceased to be a manufacturing centre, yet her trade as a dépôt and port of lading and discharge had increased by leaps and bounds owing to the greater facilities given to the shipping trade by the new Thames barrage and lower-river wharfage. Her main arteries were still daily blocked by congested traffic, notwithstanding the transit of heavy goods by rapid lighters, petrol and steam, up and down the river.

An exclamation of irritation escaped Lesley when he glanced ahead and observed the block. Stopping the hansom he jumped out, and hurried down the thronged pavement to the *Suffrage* offices, a handsome

mass of buildings some fifty feet away. With a nod to the two commissionaires touching the cap to him, he ran up the steps.

On impetuously shoving apart the swing doors, he almost precipitated himself against a lady at the foot of the corkscrew stairs that abutted directly on the entrance and "inquiries office."

"A thousand pardons," he exclaimed apologetically, pulling himself up. "Hullo, it's you, Winnie! Can you spare me a minute or two? What's wrong? You look flustered."

"Haven't you got the news? . . . I am just coming down."

Lesley caught the notes of apprehension, excitement, in his sister's voice; and he shot a look of disquiet at her, standing two steps above him.

Her usually pallid face was flushed a little. Consternation, a flicker of agitation, indefinable fears, swept across her rather masculine, clear-cut features, with the broad insistent chin, which seemed to perpetuate itself in the Savill family. A very sudden display of sisterly interest, he thought, and paused before answering.

He wondered how much she knew. The Cabinet's stiff-necked attitude against increased naval expenditure incurred even in replacing defective craft, lest the "expiring militarism abroad be revived"?—the Admiralty's resignation delayed, procrastinated rather, through Mr. Marlborough's pervasive influence?—and Captain Savill's three reports, pigeon-holed, and his naval career ended? How much did the *Suffrage* know?

Established May, 1917, as the transatlantic organ in Britain for the advocacy of the Anglo-Saxon League

combating the socialistic canker, it had already attained phenomenal circulation and weight of influence among the middle and upper classes in London and the provinces; while its issue of five editions between 3 a.m. and 8 p.m. had led the popular dailies to follow suit. With its Yankee push and 'cuteness reinforcing that sanity of view, that uprightness and persistency of aim which had always distinguished the Press of Britain, the *Suffrage* could cause a mighty crackling of thorns beneath the political seeth pot.

"Have you not had the news, then?" Miss Savill asked in a sharp, amazed voice. "The affair seems incredibly outrageous. We can't make out some of the wire. Whitehall officials are so obtuse in a crisis, I thought I'd better run down myself rather than telephone for confirmation."

But Lesley, wrapped up in his own personal troubles, did not comprehend that there was another and infinitely momentous significance in her words.

"It's hardly good form this, Winnie," he replied sullenly, "making sensational copy out of your own family. You at least might . . ."

"Our family?" she flashed out, then paused as if recalled by Lesley's reference.

"Is it possible the Government don't know," she went on in a low voice, glancing to see if the "inquiries" office-keeper was out of earshot, ". . . about Sydney? . . . The Japanese have been mobbed—their squadron opened fire. The town's in their hands. . . . They have . . ."

But she had broken off on marking the office-keeper leap from his stool, and thrust his ear against the cup-shaped mouth of the further speaking-tube.

"I'm wanted, Hollyers?"

"Yes, m'm! Mr. Ferris. He asks if ye'd gone. He says I'm to say, m'm, they've hit on something of t'other cypher."

Voices broke out on the second floor, calling her name; and Miss Savill turned and rushed upstairs. As Lesley, stunned yet incredulous, hurried in her wake, there again echoed in his ear the shouting of newsboys careering along the busy street:—

"OPENIN' OF THE PEACE CONGRESS.
LIST OF TO-DAY'S SPEAKERS."

In the middle of the 'foreign' editor's room a small group of excited sub-editors, bending over the littered table, were examining the slip of code matter run off by the tape machine. But the meaning of some of its characters still baffled them.

"We've hit on the base letter of the other cypher—'t.' It doesn't belong to any of our codes," Lesley heard Ferris, the foreign-news editor, say in his ebullient tones to Miss Savill. "Fourteen units not ours. But, anyhow, we've got the 'scoup' of the century—if the wire's no fake."

Savill thrust himself forward, and looked over the editor's shoulder at the array of figures and letters which were interspaced, where translatable, with the wording of the message.

"Good God," he jerked out, "are you positive about it?"

Ferris threw a look behind him to see who spoke. He pointed with his blue pencil at the litter of slips before him.

"I get it the same, every time, Mr. Savill. 'Syd-

ney—outbreak—Japanese. When—wiring—squadron — firing—landing—men. Town—seized—great—loss.' Then runs on this other cypher with ' t ' as its base letter. We've asked for a ' repeat,' but the eastward cables are blocked now. And, odd enough, no Australian stuff has come in over the Pacific cables to Frisco and Vancouver for the last two hours. Odd, isn't it ? "

Lesley stared at the cablegram. To him, the very hypothesis of such an outbreak was monstrous, apart from its improbability.

A presentiment of evil, a feeling of nervousness, swept through him. He leaned down—made a grab at the table telephone before him ; and energetically rang up the Colonial Office.

" I'm Savill, Mr. Marlborough's secretary," he replied to the query from the Colonial Office " inquiries " clerk. " Switch me on at once to the Permanent Secretary, or the head of the staff, if he is out. Quick ! "

" ' Japanese cruisers visiting Sydney.' Five, all new vessels. We gave blocks and a note on their strength last week. . . . Yes, when they were at Auckland."

But Lesley had not heard the sub-editor's reply ; he had suddenly jammed the receiver to his ear, and was straining his hearing to the utmost. Over the humming wire were coming indistinctly the Secretary's panic-stricken voice, exclamations, abrupt orders, and all the sounds of an unlooked-for and dramatic disturbance of the usual official impassivity.

Frantically he rang up again.

" Yes, it's me," he replied to the chief of the staff. " Have you any word about Sydney ? The *Suffrage* here has got a wire from their man there. The mob

has broken out on the Japanese—their five cruisers firing on the town. For God's sake, say it's not true!"

". . . Most disastrous. . . . The Japanese seizing all communications, everything in confusion. Cable just being deciphered, very mixed, some parts missing. Hurry for Mr. Marlborough at the Town Hall. Allow no leakage, yet. The *Suffrage* must hold back publication at least twenty minutes."

Ferris had already read the consternation deepening on Lesley's blanched face. Swiftly he pencilled the slip of copy, and slipped it into the carrier of the pneumatic tube delivering to the printers.

Then with a significant shrug he handed to Miss Savill the topmost slip of a batch just sent downstairs from the wirelessed and telephoned news-room. It was from their correspondent at Berlin.

"LÜKOW STRASSE, 12.33 P.M.

"I have just heard a most sensational Bourse rumour. Mobs at Sydney have got out of hand, have attacked the men landing from the Japanese cruisers. The warships have opened fire on the town. The information is said to emanate from Wilhelmstrasse."

"I'm not surprised at that," quoth the foreign-news editor laconically. "These Deutschers are far ahead of us out East. Must we hold back the news, Miss Savill?"

§ 4

Lesley flung a five-shilling piece to his hansom driver as the man slowed down along the Embankment opposite Temple Pier, and jumped out and rushed on to the landing-stage.

At the foot of the stairs, a waterman plying for hire

in one of the small motor-boats, then much used for swift and convenient transit by the river, marked his headlong haste; he called out to him, at the same time slipping the bight of his mooring line.

"County Hall steps. Top speed. A fiver—and the fine too, if the river police catch us," the secretary panted as he deposited himself on the shiny cushions in the awning-screened stern sheets.

Some one pushed off the boat, her engines opened out their stunted note; the next second the boatman had slipped the clutch into position, and with a rip and jerk the small craft tore away up-stream.

Somerset House slipped past, and Waterloo Bridge fled over their heads; and they seemed to leave the tugs and lighters, the barges, wherries and river steamers standing still in the stream. The south embankment, with its shady trees and long stretches of public gardens glowing with blossoming shrub and flower, backed by the noble piles of business offices lining the thoroughfare, rushed astern in a twinkling. Then as T556 shot from under the third arch of Charing Cross Bridge she swept across the nose of a motor launch crossing the river, almost grazing her bows; and straightway the launch's syren broke out into a vindictive hooting to the water police at Westminster south landing-stage.

"That's a tenner lost ye, sir, for the fine," shouted the waterman from forward, where he tended his engines and steered the boat. "They'll nab us at the steps."

But Lesley in the conflicts of his emotions did not hear him.

The news at first had struck him aghast; but now he was conscious of anger and fiery indignation rising in him at the high-handed barbaric procedure of the

Japanese. He sought to curb himself. The 'earnest pride of progressive people in the principles and practice of Peace and Arbitration'—thus Mr. Marlborough had vigorously asseverated—was about to be tested, and that precipitately.

On the high terrace that stretched along the front of the impressive mass of Gothic architecture comprising the London County Council head offices, council hall and banqueting chamber, facing New Scotland Yard on the north side of the Thames and bounded westward by Westminster Bridge and St. Thomas's Hospital, a gay and serene throng of privileged onlookers still lingered in the shelter of the awning. Underneath it they had greeted the members of Congress gaining the main entrance by way of the Westminster Bridge approach.

To some of them now gazing over the carved balustrade at the busy flow of traffic on the south embankment there came, then, the sight of two water-police skiffs pouncing on T556 as she surged alongside the steps reaching from the thoroughfare and gardens opposite the County Hall, down to the water's edge, and of Savill dashing madly up them.

From astonished friends and acquaintances there were volleyed forth queries and calls as he topped the terrace stairs. Near the great doors, Miss Stellman, daughter of Senator Stellman, the owner of the *Suffrage* group of journals, pressed forward and cried urgently to him. But without acknowledgment he hurried on to the small group of officials standing on the lower steps of the outer lobby.

"Well!" commented Miss Stellman to herself, concealing the chagrin on her fair face as she turned to her chaperone, "something is not just right when he

won't stop to say one word to me. . . . Yes, Aunt Dreischer, isn't he in a hurry! . . ."

But the excitement of the moment had enveloped Savill. Indeed, he was barely conscious of those about him.

"Mr. Marlborough? Mr. Marlborough?" he jerked out.

The inspector of the police saluted. "Just begun speaking, sir."

Not till the inner baize-lined doors of the council hall had noiselessly swung-to behind him, and he beheld the world-wide audience, and heard the Prime Minister's ringing enthusiastic voice did Savill quite realize the terribleness of his task.

The council hall was semicircular in form, about a hundred feet in diameter, divided into bays by seventeen columns of marble and bronze. Gangways separated the tiers of comfortable seats, each with its desk and locker before it; and above them ran the public gallery with its splendid grill of beaten ironwork. From the rostrum, raised about four feet above the centre of the hall, Mr. Marlborough was addressing the opening speech to the gratified and elated members of Congress. Their applause punctuated his every other period.

". . . We have passed through long years rich in peace, in arbitration and progress along the higher principles. Sanguine prophets of the brotherhood of nations, and the ardent advocates of the internationalism of mankind, of man, knowing, loving, living with man as his brother and no insidious foeman—have they not good reasons—nay, the right, I say—to proclaim the days of war and internecine strife have almost gone for ever among the cultured nations of the East and

West ? Have not modern developments indicated the world's settled indisposition to throw the sword into the balance when the merits of rival national claims call for adjudication ?

" We have seen, years ago, how Norway and Sweden severed their union, how the independence of His Majesty King Hakon's realm was recognized without a shot having been fired save in celebration. Did not Hungary crown her Sovereign Lord at Buda-Pesth, and take rank among the Powers, without an armed conflict with Austria and her ally ? Has not Austria herself now thrown her lot in with the Greater Germany without provoking any European strife save in the wordy intercourse of journalism ? Yes, we may truly say, gentlemen, the evocation of War is done with."

To Savill standing in the semi-obscurity at the foot of the passage leading from the inner lobby, the Premier's words came as stabs from a double-edged dagger. For a moment or two he held back, then hurried up the gangway.

Mr. Marlborough's burning glance fell on him as he mounted the steps of the rostrum ; and with a gesture of surprise, of interrogation, the Minister bent forward, and took the scribbled message. His full, resonant voice suddenly stopped. A deep vivid flush suffused his face and neck. But in an instant he recovered himself.

Slowly he faced the crowded benches. When he spoke his voice was strained, charged with pathos and deep dignity.

" Gentlemen, a crisis, an evil crisis, a crisis unforeseen and wholly untoward, peremptorily calls for my presence elsewhere."

" Hush ! " he cried, stretching out his arm in appeal

to the World's Justice Seat, as there arose the great murmuring of wonder, dismay, apprehension. "Do you not hear the awful news? It is Asia throwing us back into the barbarity of the Middle Ages."

And at the moment London herself seemed to have stilled her voice—stunned, appalled, to the depths of her colossal being.

Through the open windows of the Hall there echoed from the Embankment the voices of newsboys, faint and shrill—

"JAPANESE CRUISERS FIRING ON SYDNEY.
"TOWN IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.
"TERRIBLE LOSS OF LIFE."

CHAPTER II

BEFORE ENGLAND KNEW

AS official information of the astounding outrage slowly filtered westward to the capital of the British Empire there ensued nine hours of wild excitement and suspense. Without a doubt, this delay—which was partly owing to the continued blocking of the cables and partly to the difficulty of collecting authentic data in the confusion prevailing at Sydney—did much aggravate the tension leading up to the one and inevitable culmination.

To Savill, who felt all Mr. Marlborough's poignant dismay and apprehension, the hours passed like some nightmare sprung into real being; the malign significance of it aimed directly at the Cabinet, the Party—the Empire, that word which then, alas, was on the lips of but too few Britons! He was correct. There were now fast approaching both to the Old World and the New, hours, multiple and heartrending, charged with inexorable suspense and all the anguish of life-and-death hostilities between races endued with deep and ineradicable antipathies. Till the end of time, the West will be West, and the East East. By the Creator it is appointed.

Ay, the time was coming when Britain was to turn for guidance to her hereditary characteristics of race

and governance—was to cast aside her slough of sans-culottic benevolence towards the clamant sections of her captious democracy.

Was it fate, then, or the Premier's inward ken of the demagogue, or acute prescience of the future, that brought to his lips the only words Lesley heard him say as the motor-brougham whizzed across Westminster Bridge, on to Whitehall.

Mr. Marlborough's face was pallid, and the muscles of his cheek and mouth were twitching as if a stroke was taking him. His staring eyes were fixed on his hands, the fingers of them tightly interlacing each other.

"O God, give us peace, give us peace," he breathed, almost inaudibly, to himself.

Perhaps the traffic suspended along the route, and the voices questioning, cursing, incredulous, rising from the crowds and clusters pressing on every person who had managed to grab a *Suffrage*, had quickened his admonitive dæmon. And perhaps he himself knew what he was: a harlequin statesman, his mind dieted —as himself had confessed—on Machiavelli; his extraordinary rise to the post of England's First Commoner, based on subtle and discreet use of party shibboleths and terminological inexactitudes. A statesman, indeed, without fundamental power, but only a colossal cocksureness—infallibility—which the egregious many do mistake for power of that order.

Yet he assured his Cabinet that afternoon he had all faith in the conspicuous sanity of the British nation, was confident of its strength to resist 'Japanese measles,' which some of his colleagues, riper in human experience and the psychology of the masses, were prognosticating would immediately attack the active

sections of the public at home and over-seas. The sanity of the nation was certainly about to be conspicuously displayed, but not in assuming the form Mr. Marlborough counted upon.

His confident words were belied by the very rapidity with which the ill-fated news spread. From St. Mary to Lerwick, from Yarmouth to Ballina in far Mayo, the evil tidings became known early in the afternoon; and quickly were they disseminated by extra editions of the provincial press and handbills issued by the county newspapers, and by the newsagents themselves in the far-outlying districts.

§ 1

Now it was that Japan's protracted and stubborn commercial aggression in the Far East, mid-Asia and India, her underground propaganda of "Asia for the Asiatics," by means of Buddhist missionaries and Shinto priests in India and Indo-China, together with her pointed remarks on the non-renewal of the 1905–15 treaty (remarks based on references to the reduced state of Britain's armaments), had poisoned the former good feeling between nation and nation.

Before night fell on June 1, 1920, London and the Provinces were, then, in a furore of excitement and exasperation, which became dangerously heightened when the official details, issued just after the Commons had risen, confirmed the statements cabled home by British Press correspondents, and emanating in much exaggerated forms from certain bases on the Continent.

Of all the accounts published the most lucid was that

subsequently embodied in the supplementary Blue-book concerning the calamitous affair. It was put before the Colonial Office through the agency of Lesley Savill; and as it gives the most succinct and connected account from the "inside" point of view, His Majesty's Government thought it expedient to include it. It is now embodied in this narrative, just as it came from the pen of this unbiassed eye-witness.

But, hours before full and accurate information reached the seat of the British Empire, the news of the Sydney rioting was spreading with extraordinary rapidity and exaggeration throughout the East.

§ 2

This, then, was the state of matters up to the morning of June 1, when Savill, going down to Winsted Hall for the night, left Fenchurch Street Station by the London, Tilbury and Southend Mono Rail.

"I won't need you till the morning, just as usual," Mr. Marlborough had said to him. "Viscount Keiki does not expect completed despatches from Tokio till early morning. He won't give any inkling as to their attitude there—but all will be well. Nobody can doubt justice will prevail in the end."

CHAPTER III

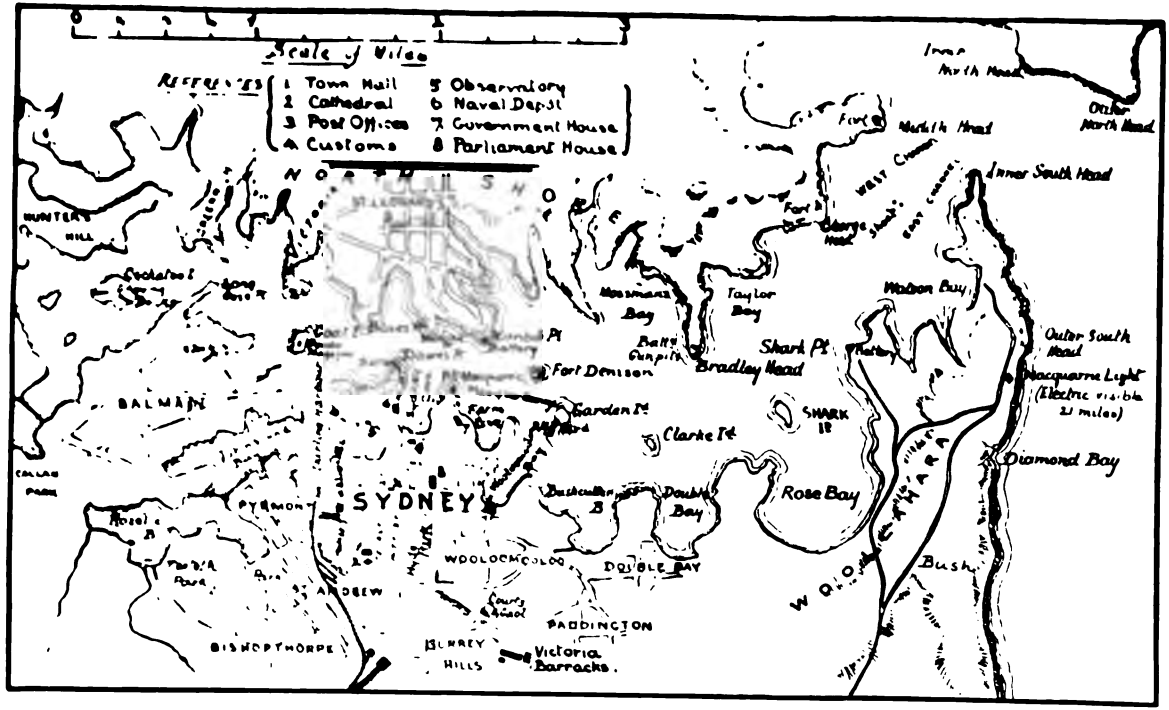
THE NARRATIVE OF WALTER SAVILL

OF THE N.S.W. ENGINEERING COMPANY, SYDNEY, AS WRITTEN FOR HIS FATHER

. . . NO doubt the despatches already published, together with the press telegrams, will have given you an idea of the wild times we have been having over here. However, as I know very well you want to hear about it from me, and what I was doing in it, I shall try and give you a plain tale of how I fared, and what actually took place.

On Wednesday morning, now just a week ago, the Japanese squadron, which has been making an informal tour of the Pacific ports, was signalled off the Heads, and at ten o'clock came steaming into harbour.

You know how keen I am about everything on the sea, and in particular about all naval matters—so, things being rather slack (the Japs had just undercut us in a big thing at Batavia—a re-installation of dynamos and lights at the Tanjong Priok Docks), I took a day off, and went out " for to see " in a crowded excursion steamer belonging to the Manly Beach Company, to meet and cheer our visitors with whom, candidly, Australasia in general is not enamoured. How-



PLAN OF SYDNEY HARBOUR.

ever, this is not an attempt, dad, to excuse what ensued later on.

The scene in the harbour was one of great picturesqueness and beauty. All the tramps and cargo liners and mail boats, that lined up both sides the inner fairway, rivalled each other in making a brave show of colour, while hundreds of small boats and yachts sported gorgeous flags of the Rising Sun. One of the most noticeable features was the avenue of motor launches and cutters, private and licensed, of which Sidney possesses close on three hundred, while to the westward in man-of-war anchorage, lay our warships, in line ahead and dressed rainbow fashion in all the glory of full-dress bunting.

Escorted by a crowd of steamers and motor boats, the visitors came in by the East Channel, round the Inner South Head. The battery at Bradley Head had been fully manned for the forenoon by the artillery, and, as the *Azuma* (flagship) came abreast of it, her quickfirers thundered out a salute to which the shore guns replied; there was another exchange of salutes as the cruiser squadron let go anchor in seven-eight fathoms off Farm Cove. Even a landsman like myself could not help being struck by the beautiful way in which the five great floating castles of steel, keeping perfect intervals, glided up to their anchorage and simultaneously sent the chain cables roaring through the hawse holes, and as they swung to their anchors blazed with the long flashes of the salute from their upper-deck guns. Our navy was represented by the state battleship *Sydney*, the old Navy ship *Pyramus*, dépôt for torpedo boat crews, and the three state destroyers, *Gar-fish*, *Snapper* and *Barracouta*. They acknowledged the salute by running up the sun

flag of Japan and answering gun for gun. The crowds along the wharves cheered heartily, and with our hurrahs were mingled the banzais of sailors, crowding the rigging of a dozen Japanese merchantmen, and of their compatriots of the local colony who had chartered a steamer for the morning.

§ I

I think I mentioned in a former letter that we have a Japanese electrician at our works, Kato, a very smart young fellow, hard-working, anxious to learn all he can, very polite, and yet occasionally a source of trouble —the outside firms do not like him being with us, and are apt to make difficulties over any job he has a hand in.

As late in the afternoon I came off the excursion steamer at the ferry wharf near the Customs House, I met Kato coming on shore off a naval motor-launch, in company with a lot of Japanese business men belonging to Sydney.

I walked up the landing-stage and wharf with him, but as we were making our way into George Street a man I knew wished me good day, and, asking Kato to excuse his speaking a word with me in private, drew me aside.

"Don't you mind me givin' you a word!" said he in the rather pragmatic Australian manner, "but if I were you, I reckon I would not be too much in public with your yelly friend there. Our people are having rows with 'em in some of the saloons already, down-town here. There'll be a dust in the evening, sure! Why not get him home?"

I was annoyed, and told him I did not care what

the larrikins might be doing down-town—I was not in the habit of hanging about drinking saloons!

But, when Kato and I reached George Street, I realized that the warning which I rather resented had reason in it.

The street was thronged, and some of the rougher elements in the crowds on the footways were showing they did not welcome our visitors. Many of the little men were being hustled by the big Australians; but the Japanese just smiled and stared as if they thought the Sydney folk were clumsy in their movements and the collisions were involuntary.

Near Market Street in the very centre of the Old Town there was a display of flags on the front of a large store belonging to a firm that held the agency for a big Japanese hardware factory. From a flagstaff on the roof floated the Japanese flag, and the British, Australian and Japanese ensigns were displayed on poles rigged out at the upper windows. A crowd, whistling and hooting, had gathered before the shop. In the windows of it there was of course a great display of Japanese fancy goods.

At first I could not understand what was the cause of the excitement. Presently there were shouts of "Well done!" "He's done it; here he comes!"

Every one was looking up; many were pointing at the roof. There I saw a tall young fellow, with a bundle of bunting hanging on his arm, making his way, from an adjoining attic window, along the parapet of the roof towards the flagstaff. Standing beside the staff he hauled down the Japanese flag, and hoisted the Australian ensign in its stead.

"That's right," shouted a man in the crowd. "Never the Jap flag above ours; eh, boys?"

There was a cheer—then a stone was thrown at the shop window. It starred the glass, and the shopmen rushed out and rattled the steel shutters down. The crowd then linked arms, and began to move down the street towards the harbour, singing 'Rule, Britannia.' As I did not want to get into a row with the larrikins, I hurried Kato into a side street, and we made our way to a restaurant, where we had tea.

He was very indignant; so was I. It looked as if there was an organized scheme among the rougher elements to slight our visitors.

Kato said he was going to one of the music halls, in the evening, and that a number of sailors from the squadron were to be there. I arranged that he should dine with me, and we would go together. In the *Evening Telegram*, and the *News*, I learned that the crowd which had started the riot in George Street had been broken up by the police, after some rough and tumble fighting with a number of Japanese sailors whom they had encountered.

I expected a lively time in the evening—I had no idea of what was coming!

At the music hall some officers were in the boxes, with some well-known Japanese business men. The pit and the lower circle had been thrown open free to the sailors; in these parts of the house, then, there was a dense mass of bluejackets and petty officers. As we took our places in the stalls we were handed the programme in both English and Japanese.

At first the various turns were heartily applauded from all parts of the house. Then the trouble began, when the cinematograph was turned on. Some beautiful pictures were shown, taken by the new colour process; and the second series of them showed the

Mikado reviewing his army at Tokio. As the emperor and his staff came riding into the view the Japanese cheered wildly; but mingling with the cheer came a discordant yell from the gallery, which was crowded with the larrikins. Most of us in the better parts of the house applauded with the Japanese, but the din from the gallery rose higher and higher—there was a confusion of banzais and booing, a perfect babel of sound. Then suddenly the curtain was lowered, and the manager appeared at the footlights.

He was trying to speak, to make some appeal—but it was hopeless. The Japanese thought he had surrendered to the rough element, had accepted the insult to their emperor; they stood up cheering wildly, and the gallery yelled louder than ever. In one of the boxes I saw a Japanese lieutenant gesticulating and arguing with his friends; from another box, an officer leant forward and called out something, I could not hear, to the manager. The people near me were nervous. Some women looked as if they would faint, others were making their way out of the house.

Then the officer who had spoken to the manager stood up—I think he was standing on a chair in the box—and held up his hand, asking for silence. The Japanese cheers ceased, but the noise in the gallery redoubled, yet there was comparative quiet, and the officer was able to make himself heard in his own language. He shouted a few words, evidently an order, for the sailors began filing out.

"What has he said?" I asked Kato.

"He has done the right thing," answered my Japanese friend, with a furious look in his usually smiling face. "He said, 'Comrades, our emperor has been insulted; let us leave this place. Back to the ships.'"

I told him I thought he over-rated the importance of a crowd of ignorant fools and roughs in the gallery, and that if he had been more patient the police would have been sent for, to clear the gallery.

"No," said Kato; "how can we be patient? Why ought we to wait for more insults? Good night, Mr. Savill; I go with my countrymen." And he turned his back on me, and followed the people who were streaming out of the house. Looking up at the gallery I saw that it was empty.

In the street, though, I was horrified to see the Japanese, forming up in front of the theatre, were now being assailed by a crowd composed of the gallery larrikins and sympathizers. There was a rough fight in progress, for all the world like a huge football scrum. Near the front entrance a couple of officers, trying to join their men, were being hustled by the mob; so I and some others chipped in, knocked down a few of the roughs, and made a way for the officers, who saluted as they passed us. There were very few police on the spot, and they were helpless, but presently reinforcements arrived from headquarters, and the street was cleared. The Japanese officers had been doing their best to keep their men from doing any more than merely holding the mob at bay, and they now began to march them towards the quay.

I cannot say how far the disturbance had been organized, but the roughs got together in small bodies, and marched along the street, cheering and singing and gathering numbers as they went. They attacked every Japanese they met, and the unfortunate thing was that many of the better classes took no steps to check them, partly from sympathy with an anti-Jap manifestation, partly from the reluctance

of the average respectable citizen to get mixed up in a row. Japanese flags were torn down, windows where they were displayed were broken, bars where Jap bluejackets were to be found were attacked and cleared out. In those proceedings some of the mob were roughly handled by the men they attacked.

I had followed the main body of the sailors. There were about three hundred of them in column, and a lieutenant had taken command. The police had formed an advanced guard for them, and there were also constables protecting them on the flanks. The sailors resented being guarded in this way; they were angry and excited, and I heard one of the petty officers say to a policeman, "We are unarmed, but we can take care of ourselves."

But when the column reached the corner of Bridge Street there was a sudden check—out of a side street came a confused rush of men. A shouting mob was driving before them a handful of Japanese, an officer and a score of men. One or two of them had blood on their faces, for stones had been thrown. At the corner of the street a tall larrikin sprang at the officer as he turned for a moment, and knocked him down with a blow on the back of the neck. And then one of the petty officers dashed at the ruffian. I could see he gripped him, and with his right hand on his throat was forcing his chin upwards and backwards—it was a Jiujitsu trick of the kind used only in a life-and-death struggle. The Australian was helpless against such an attack. When the Japanese relaxed his hold, the dead man fell in a heap on the pavement.

The Japanese shouted with joy at the victory of their champion, swept the police aside, and charged the crowd. In the midst of the whirling mass of men in

Bridge Street I heard the sharp crack of a revolver, then over the heads of the press a sword flashed in the lamp-light. The sailors wore no side-arms ; but the officers of course had their swords, and the fact that an officer had drawn on his assailants showed this new riot was more serious than the first.

§ 2

Here, in the streets of Sydney, mob madness had seized the crowd, and the Japanese sailors, unarmed, faced by sudden danger, insulted, menaced, outraged by a rabble they despised, had caught the infection of disorder and were themselves becoming a mob, as fierce and dangerous as the howling crowds that pressed upon them.

With a wild yell they charged along the street—at first driving the larrikins before them ; but the mob closed in upon their rear, and issuing from the side streets pressed on their flanks and broke them up into detached groups. The lieutenant had been struck down by a missile, and stunned and senseless was borne along by his men, who formed a guard around him. Some of the petty officers, wild with fighting fury, were calling to their men to attack, others were striving to draw their parties off by side streets to the Custom House quay. These divided counsels helped the mob. Some parties of the Japanese retreated to the quay, turning more than once to keep the attack from closing on them ; but others pushed their way into the town.

At the quay a few boats from the fleet were lying, whalers, pinnaces, and a couple of launches with steam up. There were not a dozen boats in all, for it was not expected that any large number of men would return to the fleet till near midnight or after.

As the first parties fell back on to the quay it was clear that there were barely enough boats to take them off, but the deficiency was soon remedied by seizing a number of harbour boats. The injured lieutenant and several men who had been hurt were put on board a steam pinnace, and she sped away towards the squadron. Hustled and stoned by the mob, the rest of the men put off in the other boats, but the other steam launch lay to about a hundred yards from the quay, after having towed out four large harbour boats and secured them to a mooring buoy. This was a precaution to secure the retreat of the next party that might reach the quay.

I followed the mob down to the Custom House quay—fascinated by the street fight, though I had a feeling of utter dismay at this lawless attack on the guests of the colony, without my being able to intervene in any useful way.

The rioters cheered wildly as the boats moved away, and hurrahing and singing, they began to move along the west side of Sydney Cove, marching towards the jetties near Dawes Battery. Beside our Naval Depôt a party of naval police tried to stop them, but this handful of men was swept away.

At the first jetty lay a Japanese merchantman's boat, some of her men smoking on the jetty, while waiting for their mates. Before they could realize their peril the mob had rushed them. Some escaped in their boat. Two were flung into the water, and swam to their comrades.

As the mob cheered at this new success—such it seemed to them—suddenly through the darkness there shot a long broad ray of cold dazzling light—a searchlight from the *Nisshin*, the Japanese warship furthest up har-

bour and almost abreast of Fort Macquarie, had been brought to bear full upon them. For the moment they seemed to be cowed into silence, then there was a rush for the battery, where were only a sergeant and ten men in charge. The leaders of the mob had somewhere secured a flag, the British ensign with the stars of the Southern Cross. They bent it on to the flagstaff halliards and displayed it amid a frantic burst of cheering. All the while the searchlight played upon them. To me it looked like a terrible warning.

In the streets there were now several centres of riot. The police were helpless. The mayor and several of the magistrates had gathered at the Town Hall, and had sent to the Victoria barracks for military assistance. Two companies had been marched to the Town Hall, where they waited, standing at ease. The crowd pressed round them, and sang 'Rule, Britannia,' till they were hoarse.

"What are you here for, boys?" said a well-known Labour agitator, who stood in the front of the crowd close to the soldiers. "We're giving the yellow devils a lesson. You won't spoil sport?"

An officer ordered him away for inciting the men to disobedience. But he just shrugged his shoulders good-humouredly.

"Pish, captain," quoth he, "your boots are a bit too big for you! You don't get a single Tommy Cornstalk to fire on his folk, all 'cause of some gouge-eyed Chinks. Rat on the squirts, say I!" And the people about him cheered.

Meantime the danger point was rapidly being neared. I had come back to the quay, and saw by the glare of the searchlight a steam pinnace coming shoreward from the squadron. As she sped up the Cove I was told

by a man who had come round from Fort Macquarie shore that lamp signals had been made by the *Azuma* to her consorts, and smoke was issuing from their funnels, while their searchlights were sweeping the south shores and upper harbour. The great cruisers seemed to be preparing to slip their moorings.

The pinnace made for the jetty steps below the Observatory, and the crowd began to hurry in the same direction, gesticulating and shouting among themselves. By taking a series of short cuts, however, I got in advance of them, and arrived on the jetty just as the pinnace ran in.

What was my astonishment to see Kato in her bows—Kato, my engineer!—although he was so much disfigured by sticking-plaster and bandages about his face and neck that I could hardly recognize him. He called to me as he leapt up the steps. He, as I afterwards learned, had been hurt in the riot, and had gone off to the fleet with his countrymen from the Customs Quay.

"What luck!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Savill, take this," holding out a letter to me. "It is for the mayor. We cannot submit to our men being massacred, and the rest of us in Sydney here treated like vermin. The admiral orders this letter to be delivered to the mayor at once. It is impossible for me to get a safe conduct. You are our friend. Will you take it? Every moment's delay adds to the dangers."

"Give it me," I replied. "For God's sake, you Japs, do nothing rash. Keep your heads. All 'll be quiet immediately—the troops are called out. Quick. Back to the boat. Here the brutes come."

As I jinked behind some sheds, out of their sight, I saw Kato pause on the top step, and shake his fist at

the rioters. A gust of savagery swept over his face, making the blunt, rather negrillo features, with their high cheekbones and oblique eyes, simply fiendish in their malignity of expression.

"Down with the Mongol squibs!" yelled a ringleader, and stones began to fly. As Kato rushed down the steps to the pinnace I mixed with the mob, and when I looked back she was steaming very fast for the open.

§ 3

Past the Observatory I made my way, and then by Argyll Street into George Street. I could see a good distance ahead here, up-town, and noted the tramcars had stopped running; a long line of them stood in a block just above Charlotte Place. The shops and the drinking saloons were closed, their deep glass fronts shuttered. Far down the street towards the quay ranged an impenetrable crowd, and from it rose the confused tumult of infuriated men. An excited cabman told me the street down there had been hurriedly barricaded by means of carts and cabs, drays and tramcars.

"There's a lot o' sodgers topsides here, on t'other side of the block," said the man; "but they ain't hot on comin' down again' the barricade. The boys mean to keep them out o' this mischief, you bet!"

Leaving the main thoroughfare and working round to my right, I found the other streets blocked in the same manner; there was no passage even by the side streets fronting on the quays; so just below Pyrmont Bridge I hailed a boatman, and offered him five shillings to pull me up to the goods depôt—from it, you see, I could get round by Sussex and Druitt Street to the Town Hall. Glancing back down Darling Harbour,

as the boat sped under the bridge, I saw the search-lights of the Japanese cruisers flash out on Goat Island —immense cones of dazzling white that made the nearer darkness deepen.

I landed at the upper end of the harbour, and ran to the Town Hall; I never made a better pace at Harrow! But, dad, every one was running about that night!—we were having a sensation of hostilities and invasion.

At the Town hall I immediately saw the mayor, 'Bob' Drewitt.

He was in his private room, together with a score or so of councillors and magistrates, and one of the Governor-General's aides-de-camp who was on a visit. You can just imagine how all of them looked—anxious and agitated. It was hard for them to decide what energetic measures to take. They were face to face with an exceeding grave crisis. They knew forces were now at work that in the end might convulse two empires; and, as you can judge, their habits, formed in peaceful, routine business and civic duties, hardly qualified them to grapple with such a terrible emergency.

As things turned out with us, our navy men had, thank God, already made up their minds as to what had to be done. (I wonder, father, how England's arch-priest of peace and arbitration, 'Jock' Stanhope Marlborough, goes about such a nasty piece of business. The 'moral suasion' of the National Labour Party is all gush of air from an empty bladder; but don't tell Lesley this. By the time this letter reaches you, perhaps Marlborough, like our mayor, will have been taught wisdom.)

The mayor read Admiral Tamari's letter—and it

was easy to see from the workings of his face how startling was the message I had brought him.

"It is an ultimatum," he uttered hoarsely, "this letter! He sent it off at ten o'clock, and says if the rioting is not suppressed and all his people safe by ten-forty, he will land armed parties and take control. He gives us practically no margin of time—it is already ten thirty-seven. You all are witness that, before receiving this, I requested the Officer Commanding to clear the main streets and quays with troops. I . . ."

"The barricades stop them," interrupted one of the younger magistrates. "They must rush them at any cost. The Japanese must not be allowed to land."

"Mr. Markham," answered the mayor desperately, "if Australian blood is shed by Australian hands mine is the responsibility. Our officers and men are doing their best in using persuasion before any recourse is had to force. The misguided . . ."

But suddenly his voice was checked, and he like the rest of us violently started.

Above the din from the neighbouring streets there had come the deep report of a gun; another, and still another; and then ensued a strange silence. In the city all was hushed for the moment. MIGHT had spoken out. It could effect more than 'persuasion.'

"There'll be bloodshed enough now," cried Markham, the first to speak, in a passionate voice, and raising his hand in protest. "I don't want to play dictator; but I tell you this, Drewitt, for God's sake act. Nothing'll stop these little devils now they have begun."

Men spoke together eagerly, promising to do all and anything asked of them.

The mayor rapidly directed three of his colleagues to take charge of affairs at the town hall, to communicate with the officers of the troops, and as quickly as possible endeavour to establish a cordon of police, military and Australian bluejackets who had landed, between the mob and the approaches to the quays and jetties; from the points thus occupied, parties were to be detached to rescue any of the Japanese who had been cut off. Other councillors, who were known to have influence with the waterside workers and lower grades of the populace, were to try to persuade the crowds to disperse. The mayor, accompanied by some council magistrates, was to communicate with the Japanese, and take emphatic action if necessary.

I suggested, as time was all-important, that he should take the route by which I had come—and volunteered to go down to Darling Harbour, and bring up a couple of the motor boats alongside the jetty there, just below the bridge, the mayor and his party to wait at the railway quay.

Quickly I raced back, and, as luck had it, a couple of boatmen were just pushing off, intending to slip down harbour, and see what the Japanese were doing. I hailed them, and as soon as what was wanted was explained they put themselves heartily at my service.

Since the three shots there had been no sound of firing, only the uproar hummed indistinctly through the night air. The long reach of Darling Harbour was deserted save for the numerous shipping moored at the wharves and jetties lining its east side; all interest was now concentrated where came the noises of this imbecile outburst. The swiftly shifting glare of the searchlights suggested naval activities, but the distance was too great for me to hear any indicative

sounds. Afterwards I learned that already a small detachment of Japanese bluejackets had seized the magazines on Goat Island, and thus got possession of the reserve ammunition for the batteries and land forces; while four hundred of them were being disembarked in order to clear and hold the streets where the mob had their compatriots entrapped.

Beyond the bridge I soon saw the yachting motor craft, some ten in number, beside the jetty.

"Hello, there!" I cried to their watchman—he was staring excitedly at the searchlights. "You know me? Savill of the New South Wales Engineering Co. The mayor wants two boats, at once, up at the railway quay. I'll run one. Will you run the other? My boatmen will stand by here, and see all is safe."

"An' ef I don't chuse to come 'long with you?"

"I'll seize the boats in the mayor's name. He's going down to stop this nonsense the Japs are trying on."

"I'm yer chum in that. Them blasted devils!" cried Billy. "That *Shark* there, her enjins just need startin'. Jump aboard. I'll soon ketch you up in the *Empress*."

I was aboard the *Shark*, and had her engines throbbing in two ticks; he cast off her mooring lines; I slipped in the clutch, and to a turn of her wheel swung her head round and let her go—top notch! (Dad, do you remember how I used to scare the life out of Lesley, when we motored down from town together? By the bye, how are his politics standing this racket?)

But quick as the *Shark* was, not half the short distance had been covered to the railway quay when the other boat drew abreast of me.

§ 4

The mayor and his party—four councillors and magistrates and a score of police under an inspector—quickly embarked; and at full speed we dashed down Darling Harbour. No time was lost—not a half-second! Yet as we approached the landing-place—the Colonial Steamship Company's last wharf down Darling Harbour, east side—it was evident the crisis had come to a head, and a bloody one at that! (Pardon the vulgarism!)

The near lip of shore and the open space below the observatory were deserted, but from the streets beyond, to eastward, there had suddenly rung out a hot rifle fire and then the crackling of machine guns. Oh, the Nippons, the cursed little Nippons, in their hotheadedness they were mowing down our people.

The mayor turned to me.

There positively was something heroic about him now, in his matter-of-fact manner, in his utterance, in his little rotund body now braced, with the slouch gone from the bunched shoulders. Hitherto he had always struck me as being so typical of what he was—the proprietor of the Amalgamated Drapery Stores, Pitt Street. 'Bedstead Bob,' the larrikins call him.

"Savill," said he, as I slowed down before the landing-steps, "run down to the *Sydney*, and report how matters are working out—Captain Hayes is to act on his own discretion. Return with information, unless things turn out too nasty for you. The other boat will lie off here. Inspector, detail two of your men to take charge with the boatmen. Push ashore, Markham; push ashore. We'll get inside talking distance of the Japanese, and end this terrible work."

(Ah, the obsession of this 'talking' which the Peace Congresses are responsible for!—are they not making cowards of us? He relied on it to pacify fighting men! Did you ever hear anything more foolish, father? It is just like the idiocy of party politicians.)

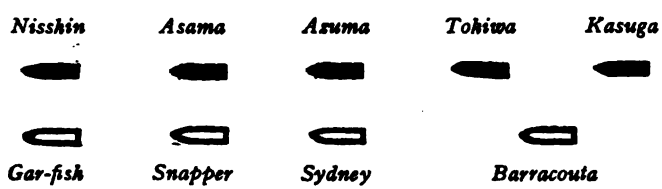
Afterwards I learned that exactly at 10.40 the Japanese flagship had fired three shells from a 9·4 inch quick-firer into the dense crowds at Dawes Point, to drive them away as the boats with the landing party approached the jetties, both sides the Point. The Japanese bluejackets, after clearing the cross streets with machine-gunfire, had then pushed up George Street, where a handful of their men had taken refuge, not far from the old naval depôt, in a house which the mob was trying to storm. The main body of the landing party, however, had concentrated at the apex, where Lower Fort Street and George Street converge, their machine guns and pompoms commanding all the approaches to the jetties. A party had seized Dawes Battery from landward, where they had removed the breechblocks and sights of the breechloaders. Across at Kirribilli Battery they had disabled the guns there in the same way. The new office of the cable company near Manly jetty had been seized, communications with the post office cut off, and already a cipher message was being sent to Tokio, viâ Guam and the American cable. Our post office had almost simultaneously found something was wrong with the land wires, telegraphic transmission having failed—later investigations show they had been cut by Japanese residing in the outskirts of Sydney.

Hoping for the best issue to the mayor's peaceful mission, but very doubtful, I headed the *Shark* for Man-of-War Anchorage where, I took it, our warships

still were. At low speed so as to run as noiselessly as possible she slipped along in the shadow of the merchantmen moored beside the quays, lining the bight between Miller and Dawes Points. But when I had rounded Dawes Point and got a full view of mid-harbour, I threw the clutch out, stopped the engines, and let her drift—eyes and mind riveted on the grim spectacle before me. I felt my heart jump into my mouth—I could hardly breathe. It was like waiting for the Crack of Doom.

On both sides of the point the Japanese flotilla lay alongside the jetties, but their guards took no notice of the *Shark ;* they also had eyes only for the great ghostly ships now standing up-harbour with just steerage way on them.

Close abeam of the Japanese were our warships, thus—



The mere twitching of a gunner's muscle—a flash, and all the horrors of war, of furious, anti-racial hostilities would burst upon helpless Sydney. Was her dementia to be drowned in blood ? It was like standing on the threshold between life and death.

The next instant the end came.

Into the darkness rushed a fiery rocket over Goat Island. It was followed by another, and another,

this time from Bradley Head Battery and the new, Cremorne heavy-gun pits.

A few seconds later, and as if quickened by them, the *Azuma's* syren roared some gigantic, unintelligible notes. Her steamboats, by the jetties round Dawes Point, straightway repeated the signals, bugles sounded them, shrill and emphatic, away up Argyle Street and in that quarter.

The Japanese landing parties were being reshipped.

"Recall your men in three minutes, or I open fire. I will blow up my ship alongside you, to get your company."

This had been the ultimatum delivered, as I afterwards heard, by Captain Hayes himself from the *Sydney's* bridge.

As his destroyers' torpedo tubes and the *Sydney's* two underwater ones to starboard would be but little short of the port broadsides of the Japanese warships, discretion had overcome Tamari's military ardour. I think, too, he had at last realized he had gone just too far in his precipitate anger—had realized he had no business to fire on the rioters and land armed bluejackets; that indeed he ought to have contented himself with Captain Hayes' rassurances given at the outset that order was being restored.

The rockets, I dare say, had rather 'riz his hair.'

They, as the *Sydney's* Bridge grimly advised him per megaphone, denoted that the firing circuits of the belts of submarine mines were now connected up, ready for instant use. (The men, sent from the *Snapper* and *Barracouta*, had had to blow in the doors of the firing stations. The non-commissioned officers in charge of the batteries are not allowed the keys of the mine field chambers and switchboards. The S. E. officer, who

keeps them, lives away at Manly, North Harbour, 'only' forty minutes from Sydney by ferry boat !!!)

The Japanese squadron then lay-to in the fairway opposite Milsons Point, waiting for their men; and our squadron stood in on Sydney Cove and Dawes Point to cover, if necessary, their embarkation. Making my little hooter yell, "I have to communicate," I sent the *Shark* down on the *Sydney* at full speed.

"That's the news?" rapped out Captain Hayes, after I had hurriedly reported to him on the forebridge, where he was watching the first of the Japs get away from the S. H. Company's jetty. And his burning eyes, his white lips, belied his appearance of iron self-command.

"How comes it, my bluejackets were not requisitioned till nine-fifty? . . . Great heavens, man, this vacillation ashore will cost us dear."

CHAPTER IV

IN THE HAUNTS OF PEACE

THE morning of June 2 opened cool and serene as if Nature strove in despite to calm the waves of heated feelings that were rising fast throughout the Country—nay, the Empire.

Clear and silvery sunshine, a soft wind blowing off leagues of distant sea, the sparkle of dewy leaves, the fragrant smell of the dew-damp woodlands, their lawns and dells still recluse with the shadow of dawn, all inspired Lesley Savill with a sharp sense of physical enjoyment and exhilaration as in the company of his father he stepped down the hall steps of Winsted Hall.

"Well, your Peace Congress will have a good day to restart their labours on," said Mr. Savill, making no attempts to hide the sarcasm in his yawning voice. "To my old-fashioned notions the less these foreigners in the Congress say about this dastardly attack on Sydney, the better for every one. You know my views on the navy and army questions. Lesley, if we now had our naval strength of 1906 and 7, the Japanese would have held their hand—thought twice of firing on British citizens. The reduction of our striking forces has been carried to an absurd length by you reformers. We'll suffer. However! . . . You have that memorandum of settlement with you?"

"No, sir! If you remember, you put it aside."

"Yes, yes! I'll get it for you now. Confound you, boy, why couldn't you have come down early last night instead of turning up just on one o'clock in the morning and racing back to town before breakfast?"

"I couldn't do it, father. This chance of mine for Mr. Everitt's seat—Mr. Marlborough thought I had better see you at once about it, for with the Peace Congress and this Sydney imbroglio on hand, I'll not be able to get out of town again for some days," replied Lesley, pausing at the foot of the steps.

"Mr. Marlborough! That Prime Minister of yours overworks you. He and his National Labour party are riding the nation to death with all these hobbies of theirs. And here is my youngest son, his right hand as a secretary, and about to stand for Parliament on the socialistic vote. Oh, yes! It is nothing short of socialism your party is aiming at," rejoined his father as he made to re-enter the hall. "I've seen many topsy-turvy changes in my day. . . . But a son of mine on the Labour side!"

With an apologetic little laugh Lesley turned away.

§ I

The gracious serenity of the morning uplifted him. Knowledge that at last he was setting his feet on his long-desired path, which, he told himself, was to lead to the front benches and all the glories of Parliamentary leadership, made his heart sing in joy and exultation. For the moment his inner vision was dimmed to any apparition of war, of bloodshed and strife. He felt as if he was walking on air.

Crossing to the balustrade bordering the terrace, he leant on his elbows, and looked before him into the south and east where were now showing the good works of afforestation undertaken by the Liberal Government under the Premiership of Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, in combination with the more active-minded landowners. As he breathed in the wine of the morning, and gazed at the wide stretch of landscape, all traces of worry and lack of sleep went from his alert, vivacious face.

His eye travelled across the irregular expanse of swaying tree-tops, across the wide straggling gaps where lay homesteads and farms, and the hamlets of Great and Little Winsted, all in the Winsted Hall estates—down to the verge of the North Sea, that thin grey streak between two and three miles away.

He heaved a sigh of satisfaction.

"Good old sea of ours; ay! ours," he muttered to himself. "It is healthy, just to get even a glimpse of it. It has made Britain what she is. The sea. . . . What a pity Jim has made such an ass of himself!"

From behind the Hall, a large quadrangular structure of brick built in the half-exotic Italian style of the sixteenth century, its stone dressing and pillars mellowed by the hand of Time, its walls creeper and ivy-clad up to the buttresses of the chimney stacks, now rang sounds of activity from the stables and adjoining garage. The rich, full-throated notes from the blackbird in the coppice beside the wilderness, that was laid out alongside the wood at the foot of the four successive terrace gardens, became lost in the outburst of song from wood, field and coppice, for bird-life had awakened to realize life and love again.

The atmosphere became tinged with faint yellow, which faded into pellucidness as the sun mounted the east, whence have ever come life and death and change. The world awoke, and now men stirred themselves to take up their regular round of tasks, that so soon were to be abandoned in haste and perturbation.

Savill drank in the scene before him.

The fragrances of gilliflower and stocks and early roses bedded in squares, triangles and circles between the balustrade and the gravelled front before the Hall, the glories and pomp of summer's flowers and her luxuriance of bright greenery, the freshness of the woods and pastures beyond the wilderness, the liquid notes of a thrush that, perched in the trellis of roses spanning the steps leading down to the middle terrace, had taken up the blackbird's threnody of praise—since boyhood all had been welcome and familiar joys to him. Ever had they given him fresh joy and delight.

This was home !

As if greedy of something escaping him, he swung round on his heel, and gazed at the old grey house with its many mullion windows, its colonnade, and low sloping roof that had sheltered fifteen generations of his stock ; the deep velvety turf of the winding walks, the product of the unremitting care of decades of English gardeners ; the coppice and wilderness just as Lady Anne of George Second's unrequited favours had planted them beyond the ancient elms, that, ungainly and bushy, mingled with the recent afforestation. Lovingly he looked at them all. They were boundaries of the haunts of peace bountiful and free—the peace of a home ignorant of foemen and of war's devastations.

"Ah! what a blessed thing is this negation of war," he murmured.

Waiting for his father to return, Lesley began pacing up and down the walk, his hands characteristically folded behind his back, his shoulders bent a little.

It came to him, though, that popular antipathy against the Japanese was swiftly coming to a head, and interfering in national affairs might prove the Ministry's stumbling-block.

"Pah! John Bull has been too long cockered for him to rush to arms, now! At peace with men, at war with vices," quoth he to himself, brisk with the sententious humanity of ardent youth and unchequered success.

§ 2

In the hall by the west oriel Mr. Savill lingered for a moment or two, and watched the young man. The cleavage in his family had never before come so sharply to him as on that morning. In his trouble and speculation, he was unwittingly doubling and redoubling the memorandum into irregular folds.

"'The old order changeth, giving place to new,' and Destiny fulfils herself in many ways. Everybody, everything seems to be changing," thought he in the hopelessness of his heart. "Winnie with her *Suffrage* and women's rights may be right. . . . Walter at Sydney may be right in his denunciations of the National Labour Party and Ministry, . . . and Lesley may be right in the end. Who knows! He may come out on top; has all his mother's grit and enthusiasm. . . . A steady head on level young shoulders. My boy!"

Sighing heavily, he opened the heavy hall door, but as a thought suddenly struck him let it swing back with a soft thud. Lost in perplexity and dismay he stared at the tessellated floor of the vestibule.

"He can't," he muttered; "he can't. Lesley can't stand if James has really forced an issue regarding his submarines. It is a direct impeachment of this Peace Ministry. Good Heavens! I had forgotten that."

As he was crossing to the terrace Lesley looked up; never before had his parent looked so old. His usual ruddy face was white and full of lines, and the elasticity seemed to have gone from his step. Instead of his sixty he looked seventy years.

"Too bad of me to worry you and keep you up all night, dad," he exclaimed, springing to him in his boyish impulsive manner. "I should have been patient, and waited."

"Not a bit! Not a bit! You did wisely in letting me know at once. It is time you were leaving, though."

"Yes! I am breakfasting with Mr. Marlborough at eight, and the correspondence has to be gone through previously. The car was to be round at four; I'm catching the first train up; Jenkinson has never been late before."

"Did he go home to the Creek?"

"Well, he thought he might as well, so I told him to look sharp. By Jove, four o'clock! I'll need to be off without him. Give him a good wigging, dad, and send him up to the station for the car."

Lesley thrust the memorandum of settlement into his breast pocket, and buttoned up his coat again.

Smartly he turned to cross the terrace, and reach the garage; but he came to an abrupt stand.

Round the bend in the long wide avenue of elms leading from the highroad, and debouching on the sweep of gravel before the east wing of the Hall, at the end of the terrace, came two cyclists pedalling at top speed.

As Mr. Savill stepped forward, aroused by Lesley's startled exclamation, they flashed past the shrubberies of laurel and rhododendrons at the head of the avenue, and came jolting across the gravel towards them.

"Here's Jenkinson," snapped Lesley, "in a deuce of a hurry now! A constable, too. What the dickens is up?"

Mr. Savill's chauffeur, a slim round-faced youth of nineteen, half jumped, half tumbled off his machine, that fell to the ground. He reeled forward. He was hatless and coatless, and his clothes were wringing wet and plastered with mud and sand. Grief, consternation and fury swept over his smudged face. Heaving and panting he tried to speak intelligibly, but could not.

"They've killed him. . . . they've killed him."

His husky voice rose into a shriek that brought the stable hands on the scene, and caused bedroom windows to be thrown up along the domestics' quarters at the back of the Hall.

"It's his faver, sir," said the constable, wiping his face with one hand and gripping the staggering lad by the left shoulder with the other. "It's his faver. 'E's been killed wiv bullets from the water. A wery strange business! I thought it best you should know directly 'bout it, sir, as ye're the nearest magistrate. A wery strange business! Joe Jenkinson jist ripped open wiv bullets from the water."

"Bullets from the water!" repeated Mr. Savill in a startled voice, on recognizing No. 112 as the constable of Great Winsted, that lies a quarter of a mile inland from the little fishing hamlet of Winsted Creek. "Another case of foreign trawlers, Grayshorne?"

"No, sir; not that. A wery strange business," replied Grayshorne, turning his eyes significantly on the three stable-hands and the domestics thrusting their towsy heads out at the windows. "P'rhaps as well to be on the spot at once, sir, for depositions, while I go on for the superintendent."

"Very well, Grayshorne, I'll go down immediately. Come along to the business room, and bring Jenkinson with you," replied Mr. Savill, beckoning to one of the understrappers standing some feet away. "Stibbert, I want the grey mare harnessed in the dogcart at once. You will drive."

"Lesley," he added in an undertone of perplexity and anxiousness, as they turned to the house, "you had better stay a few minutes, and go into this matter with me."

§ 3

To the Prime Minister's private secretary, in his indelible memories of that day, so fateful to the Old and New Worlds, there ever stood out first the little group in the business-room. Its details he knew so well: the low ceiling and dark wainscotted walls lined with well-stored bookcases and old coloured prints of the chase, with pictures of the three Derby winners of the Savill family and his father's filly of Newmarket fame: Grayshorne, before the writing table, big, burly, with

tunic still only half buttoned; alongside him, his chauffeur gesticulating and mouthing like a foreigner as he related his extraordinary story and the constable detailed his own statement: and then in the writing chair, his father, the bluff candid features charged with deepening gravity and perplexity, as he jotted down the narratives, and now and again interpolated a query.

Here, then, is the sum of the statements that became ultimately absorbed by the Foreign and Home Offices, and were presented too late to Britain's inchoate Committee of Defence.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS JENKINSON, CHAUFFEUR IN THE SERVICE OF ARTHUR SAVILL, ESQUIRE, OF WINSTED HALL, ESSEX.

"On coming back to Winsted Hall at 12.58 a.m. on the morning of June 2, having brought Mr. Lesley Savill from Southend Station, I went home to Winsted Creek, two miles distant, intending to return at 3.45 to take Mr. Lesley to the station. I hung about on the quay, waiting for my father to come in from sea about daybreak.

"It was rather thick to seaward, and I could see no further than eighty yards. About three o'clock, I should say, distant voices took my attention to seaward. I heard them again closer inshore; then suddenly there was the creak of boat blocks, some one cried out excitedly, and I heard a voice call out in alarm. The next second bullets were spitting around me, and there were cries of 'Help' and 'Murder.' I ran down to a skiff moored at the quay steps, unhitched her, and rowed out to where the cries were

coming from. They were from my father, who was struggling in the water, his boat just going under. I saw nothing else. My father could neither get into the skiff, nor could I lift him. I lashed him fast under the shoulders, and pulled for the shore, hulloing for help. Police-Constable Grayshorne was on the quay, and he helped me to carry my father ashore. He was speechless and groaning deeply. His side was practically ripped open under the short ribs. He died in a minute or two after being brought ashore."

STATEMENT OF POLICE CONSTABLE W. Z. GRAYSHORNE, 112, STATION, GREAT WINSTED AND WINSTED CREEK, ESSEX.

"Just on daybreak on June 2, my wife awoke me. She said there were cries of 'Help' and 'Murder' coming off the shore, she thought. I jumped up and went to the door, when I heard the cries. At once I hurried down to the quay. Thomas Jenkinson I met at the bottom of the quay steps, and helped him to carry his father ashore. His side was torn open with bullet wounds. It was then 3.20 a.m. E. A. Mumford and myself went out in the skiff, but could see nothing, notwithstanding there was very little wind, and we pulled out a considerable distance down-river, the water being very smooth and the tide at the full. We found the fishing-boat. She was lying on the sandy bottom, her masthead just out of the water, and her port side appeared beaten in just short of the sternsheets. L. J. Quennel of fishing-craft *Pearl*, 1423 Yarmouth, and F.A. Pertree of the *Molly*, 210 Southend, who moored at Winsted Creek quay at 3.35 a.m., just before I came away, report some

of their nets to have been destroyed and some missing, but they had not noticed any craft in the neighbourhood."

Mr. Savill read over the statements to Grayshorne and Jenkinson, then dismissed them for the ever welcome attentions of the pantry to strengthen their nerves. Slowly he swung round on his writing-chair, and re-read the narratives aloud.

"What do you think of it all?" he asked Lesley, who was standing, watch in hand.

"Why, sir, last week the new *Iphigenia* was practising off Shoeburyness at slipping floating mines. A charged case must have got adrift, and through carelessness has not been reported as missing; Jenkinson's boat has bumped against it, and the disaster results," explained Lesley with the omniscient knowledge of clever eight-and-twenty.

"No! I think not! I think not!" said a voice emphatically behind them.

Lesley abruptly wheeled, and Mr. Savill sprang to his feet. Captain Savill, tired and travel-stained, was standing in the doorway that led from the library into the business-room.

"James! Where have you sprung from?"

"Motored over from Harwich, father, on business with you. I hear you were engaged on this blackguardly business. Lesley is wrong—terribly wrong! Floating mines don't fire bullets, surely he knows that!"

The emphatic tones, the bitter earnestness of Captain Savill impinged on Lesley's consciousness; they caused in him a strange feeling of irritation, of dismay and foreboding. He snapped-to his watch, and replaced it in his pocket.

"At any rate, I must get away, father. Close on 4.15, and I've got to get into harness in less than three hours. But, Jim, tell me . . . what the dickens are you doing here, with all that bother of yours on at the Admiralty? And what *has* caused Jenkinson's death?"

Captain Savill looked curiously at his brother.

He had passed through all the fierce throes of self-abnegation. Lesley in a shock of surprise noted his eyes jaded and haggard, the hollows round them, the new lines graved on the resolute square chin and forehead. The father had sunk into his writing-chair, and was gazing mute, apprehensively, at his son.

"Well, Les, both questions spring indirectly from the same cause," James answered in a somewhat emotionless voice. "This cursed National Labour Government of yours, that blethers so much about the 'Brotherhood of the Nations,' and goes to work with its eyes and ears shut! . . . Oh, don't fire up, there's a good chap, till you hear me out. What has caused Jenkinson's death? It was a German submarine come up to breathe, and casually, as it were, spy inshore and into the creek. Jenkinson in his cockleshell surprised her, and—the dead don't speak, do they?

"Twice within the last nine months I've just been on the very ace of catching them prying inshore, but their microphones warned them each time; and because there wasn't any proof Downing Street has refused to credit the reports. 'Incredible . . . preposterous. . . . Highly dishonourable even to entertain such an idea in view of the friendly policy and relations, etc.' You are all living in a fool's paradise. You'll get a terrible awakening."

"Still the same old song, Jim," cried Lesley in testy, bantering tones. "If that's all your story, sorry I can't stay; I must be at Downing Street by seven. Most of you naval men have bees in your bonnets! By the bye, you've made a mess of your career over your submarine reports."

Mr. Savill shook his head in protestation. Quick with fatherly ruth and concern he clasped the hand of his youngest born. Fate was entwining a crown of thorns for these two sons—no splendid diadem of success.

Lesley looked in wonder at him, then again at his brother. The atmosphere seemed to have become tense; something charged it with crisis. Firmly, warmly, he pressed his parent's hand in response.

How ironical does not sympathy sometimes become, even the purest, the sincerest?

"You also asked me why I am here, Lesley," went on that hard emotionless voice. "Father knows; he told me to do my duty as was best for the Country, if not the Service. The dangers are too technical, Lesley, for you to understand without long explanations; but G and F classes of our submarines are coffins; nothing else! The Admiralty, at present, ignore the matter—the screw of politics as usual! Only through the grace of God have I and my men escaped even worse disasters than we had in E3 and 7."

Captain Savill ceased for a moment or two. Recollections of his frequent escapes from catastrophes, the awful nature of which was first brought home to the British Public in the tragedy of 1905, had shaken even his iron self-control.

"Lesley, I have refused to hold further command of my division, and have asked for a court-martial. Last

night I was relieved of my command. I have been called a coward to my face."

For a second or two Lesley stared at him, in appalled surprise and silence. Then the blood rushed to his face. He leapt forward, and warmly wrung his brother's hand. This time it was Benjamin drawing Judah out of the pit.

"Jim! You a coward?" he cried hotly, without taking second thought. "I would have struck the man down."

"Discipline! Discipline, Les," replied Captain Savill in a deprecatory voice, on his drawn face a faint smile at his brother's vehemence. "Besides, Les, perhaps I am a coward. But, you see, I have had to think of the lives of my crews."

Lesley looked at him with troubled eyes. Face to face with his brother, the officer who knew, the officer who had again and again risked his life in the depths, his submarine 'plunging' heavily, its air impaired, its mechanism imperfect through lack of long-delayed adjustments, the matter of death-trap submarines assumed a wholly different complexion to that given it by the Premier in his hasty, half-contemptuous remarks the previous morning.

Captain Savill's face and bearing told enough of the real thing.

"Are matters really so bad, Jim?"

Captain Savill nodded. His thin lips tightened. Did every one but his father and a few naval men take him to be a fool?

Lesley saw the workings of his face, and comprehended; contrition and dismay seized him. James then was not possessed of a 'chimera.' Mr. Marlborough's words recurred to him, and his face whitened.

Because of facts which had been deliberately overlooked or ignored for too long a season, his brother had had to incur cashiering and the stigma of cowardice in order to bring the case into public ken. Who had overlooked or ignored the facts, and why? It flashed upon him, too, that his political future was now impracticable.

He drew his breath in between clenched teeth. He strove to man himself. Life's thorns for the first time were pricking him.

But with a little abrupt gesture of his head, as if accepting some challenge, he turned to Mr. Savill, who had been watching them with grave, questioning eyes. If Lesley did feel like a martyr, he certainly looked like one much inclined to fight.

"Ah, dad, without a doubt Jim knows best," he cried in a strained voice. "I don't mind throwing up this Parliamentary career of mine, and it seems that Jim's part in this submarine hubbub will compel me to do so; at any rate, for the present. But, in a crisis like this, the family must hang together."

Ties of blood, then, had proved stronger than those of temperament, political bias, and training.

And in a way this was very symbolical of that which would soon come to pass between nation and nation. For soon the Anglo-Saxon Family was to 'hang' together.

CHAPTER V

JAPANESE DISORDERS SPREADING ALARMING REPORTS

THE *Daily Journal* newsbill with the catch lines—

JAPANESE DISORDERS SPREADING
ALARMING REPORTS

caught Lesley's attention as he hurried on to the London platform at Southend, the L. & T. Mono Rail station. What further madness had been enacted? Had peace and progress only served to intensify man's brute instincts?

As if fascinated he scanned the placards, which the bookstall assistants were quickly pasting down on the hoarding near by.

"'Japanese disorders spreading,' Will!" said some one behind the secretary to a companion. "More row in Sydney, I suppose. D'ye know, I'm rather in sympathy with the feeling that has burst out in this rioting; not with the rioting, though. But, suppose the little yellow devils tackle us? By Jove, US!"

"Devils to fight! Just remember the Russians!" came the reply.

"Wouldn't it be a rare old scrum—John Bull and the little Jap?"

Savill never forgot the easy bright voices. Their very intonations told of light-hearted carelessness.

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Ah! that carelessness of consequences, which is at once the source of much of Britain's success, and also of her failure to advance consistently along the path of her high destinies.

Savill made to wheel round to get a glance at the speakers, but, on the newsboy moving away to the left of him, the new placard thus disclosed suddenly arrested all his faculties.

§ I

This was what the sober unimaginative *Morning Post* declared—

PHILIPPINES REVOLTING
JAPANESE SHOT BY U.S.A. TROOPS

"Good God!" he muttered, in dismay, "it is never coming to a racial war?"

Now from Southend to Fenchurch Street Station was by Mono Rail a journey of twenty minutes, affording in the golden light of that June morning many glimpses of the new Essex, that were as pleasing and jocund as any of the reputed scenes in Merrie Old England. But Savill had no eyes either for the farm colonies standing trim and snug amidst their well-tilled acreage, and affording bright promise for the future of whilom townsmen, or for the long stretches of rich orchards between Dagenham, Rainham and Barking, where the pink and white blossom of the "Norfolk Beaufin" still showed out amidst the depths of vivid greens. With feverish haste he was reading the long cablegrams, forgetting for the time being all his private worries.

The crisis was swiftly approaching its climax. Destiny was remorselessly dealing with the situation.

In Manila, where many members of the large Japanese colony had for some time identified themselves in principle with the Philippinos' agitation for self-government, while others, involved in the secret society based on the old Katipunam society, were actively working towards the same end, namely, the creation of a native state under the protection of Japan, it had been bruited on the night of June 1 that Sydney had risen *en masse* against the Japanese, naval and civilian, and Admiral Tamari had bombarded and occupied the city. The ringleaders he had shot after trial by a drum-head court-martial, and the dignitaries of the city he had conveyed on board the *Azuma* as hostages.

One of the native journals had immediately issued a special edition of a little handbill, and distributed it gratis and by thousands.

At first the authorities had not realized what it was, for it looked like a cheap circular; but soon they discovered that it announced the Sydney outbreak as 'A Great Japanese Triumph.' It called upon the Philippinos to celebrate the victory. 'Asia for the Asiatics. The Philippines for the Philippinos.' That much-desired era was now close at hand.

As if by magic, processions had begun to parade up and down the streets, beating drums and waving flags and lanterns; and Malays, Tagals, Chinese mixed in their ranks, and in six cases Japanese became prominent among the leaders. The police had broken up a few of these processions blocking the main thoroughfares, but they immediately rallied at other points;

and then, as in the days of their revolt against Spain, the natives set fire to the town in several places. In the Binondo quarter, the chief trading centre, and also in the popular suburbs of Ermita and Malate, the authorities speedily found they had to grapple with violent disorder and incendiarism.

After some hours of horror and devastation, order had been restored; but not till early in the morning, after the regulars and a strong detachment of sailors and marines from the guardships and the preventive craft had cleared street after street with rifle and machine-gun fire.

Fifteen Japanese had been counted amongst the dead, also two members of the Japanese consular staff—an under-secretary and an interpreter; who, as reported by a captain and a sub-lieutenant of the regulars, also by a petty officer and some men of the naval brigade, had been shot down in the act of inciting the natives to resistance. They had rushed out of the Nuevo restaurant, opposite the English Tiffin Club in the Binondo quarter, and had deliberately led the rioters. Several members of the Tiffin Club corroborated the statements.

The Japanese consul averred they had only been using their influence on the side of the law and order, and in protection of Japanese property. He straightway demanded an indemnity, and the immediate arrest and trial of all the military concerned. If this concession was even entertained, so Governor Widdner had declared in his cablegram to Washington for instructions, he would at once resign and make public in the United States Press his full knowledge of the situation.

But it was the fresh news from Australia that went

far to destroy Savill's latent confidence that peace could be maintained.

On the Japanese warships withdrawing from Sydney close on midnight in accordance with the Governor-General's request, the rioters, fired with 'victory,' had again succeeded in attacking the 'yellow' quarter and the suburb where the wealthier Japanese had their residences. Working in detached bands they had effected much loss of life and property before they were compelled to scatter before the military.

And from Cooktown, Queensland, came even more ominous indications.

Of the Japanese who had almost completely supplanted the former Chinese population there—comprising as far back as 1906 two-thirds of the townsfolk—a great number had run amuck with fury on hearing of the Sydney outbreak. At the time the *Morning Post* wire was despatched, 10.43 a.m., Cooktown was in the bloody throes of a fierce if irregular conflict, and many of the Japanese were using firearms, bearing evidences of having been turned out by the Kobe and the new Shikoki arsenals.

Savill at first perused the news with incredulous eyes, as if forcing himself to disbelieve the information. Yet there it stood in all the primness of type.

"They're actually retaliating!" he exclaimed to himself, unconscious of his implied suggestion of Aryan superiority in race. "We can never keep the peace now. It is madness, sheer madness, on both sides."

He was wrong.

'Madness' had not incited the disorders. These had broken out because the instincts of a dominant race, not nullified but rendered dormant through the

long years of world-peace and commercialism, had asserted themselves at the crucial moment, even as they had in the centuries gone by against the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French Perils. Not a cheese-and-bread humanitarianism, but only that Omnipotence which brought man into being can change man's racial characteristics.

§ 2

"Savill? Savill? Mr. L-e-sley Savill?"

The call came droning down the long corridor carriage, the attendant's voice sounding wraithlike above the low soft churring of the transit gear on the carrier and 'live' rail overhead. With a jerk Lesley rose in wonder from his seat.

"Telephone message sent on by Southend, sir. Call-up came just as the train was moving out. Any answer?"

But Savill, silent in his astonishment and perplexity, merely shook his head. Vainly he rummaged in his mind for elucidation as he ran his eye over the telegram. Its contents proved a riddle to him.

Carefully he re-read the message. It, he perceived, had been retelephoned from Winsted Hall that morning, too late to reach him at the station, and had been transmitted up the line per the wireless service in touch with the trains. His perplexity deepened.

"This beats my comprehension," he muttered, smoothing out the flimsy form on the little table of the coupe. "What the dickens have I to do with old Stellman! He must have sent a most imperative message of some kind from Washington, to make Edie and Isobel turn out at four o'clock in the morning, and hunt me up."

Then thought of the tribulations of Mrs. Dreischer—whose habits and life were so informed with exactness and well-ordered ease—tickled his imagination and brought a smile to his face.

It occurred to him, too, that 'la belle Américaine,' as the *Ladies' Daily* had called Miss Stellman on her entrance into London Society under the ægis of his sister, had been rather a stranger to his eyes now that he was engrossed in his duties as Mr. Marlborough's private secretary.

For a few moments his reflections dwelt on her. With chin propped in his hand he stared absent-mindedly at the telegram.

"A good girl, a good girl—mettlesome and a bit dictatorial—with no small idea of herself and her father," was the sum of his cogitations.

The next second Lesley was chiding himself sharply for letting his mind stray. He felt, though, that recollection of her came to him as an oasis of rest after the hurry-worry and excitement of the last four and twenty hours.

Of what Senator Stellman had to tell him he could not form the merest conjecture, save that it perhaps concerned the *Suffrage* and Winifred's continued attack on Mr. Marlborough for sacrificing national to party interests.

Impatiently he folded up the wire and put it in his pocket-book, then again turned his attention on the newspapers and their ominous news.

§ 3

On passing the platform barriers at Fenchurch Street Station, Savill experienced a shock which cast him

back headlong into the maelstrom of popular excitement.

To the left of the bookstall, where early travellers were now eagerly grabbing their papers, stood the latest news recorders of various enterprising journals. An excited, gesticulating crowd was surging and crushing round the pedestal of the nearest.

With a little clutch of fear at his heart, Savill hurried forward to join them.

"What news?" he inquired of a hard-faced labourer, who was forcing his way out of the throng, holding before him his dinner-pail and 'tommy' wrapped in the still orthodox bandana handkerchief.

"Wot news? Them blarsted Hinjins 'as started wipin' us hout. All ov 'em —— Japs," grunted the man, spitting in disgust on the ground.

Shoving and elbowing himself into the press, Savill came within reading distance of the broad strip of 'tape,' on which the relentless ticker had imprinted in triple lines of long primer the news wired down from the *Tribune* office. Into him the words drove home like excruciating death thrusts, ending the life of something bright and beautiful.

The dream of generations of high-idealed Britons was being shattered.

A frenzy of contradiction rushed into the Prime Minister's secretary. He could have yelled out denial on the spot. Yet it was from journals noted for their vehement propagation of ultra-liberal views that the news emanated.

'*Statesman* reports sudden friction between natives and Europeans at Jehellapur. Police fired on by armed natives; magistrates and chief inspector shot down; many casualties. General Japanese intrigues throughout Bengal revealed, and rising threatened.'

"Disgraceful! Disgraceful! The Press is bringing on war," Savill cried hotly, indignation foolishly loosening his tongue.

"An' quite right, too, mister," growled a navvy truculently, pushing up against him in the crowd eager to read the news. "Easy, mates, easy; enuf shovin', I say. Haven't we stood them cocky Chinks' cheek long enuf, slinkin' 'bout Indyer?" And the crowd chorussed assent in heated language.

As Lesley drove quickly westward to his chambers in Whitehall Court, instead of the usual stream of toilers intent on hurrying to their work, he marked the numerous groups lingering by the way, discussing the situation. On the motor and electric buses were rows of them, each absorbed in his newspaper. A susurrus of credibility came to him. And if it were all too true, so he told himself, the downfall of the Ministry was imminent, and because of its shattered "planks"—reduced armaments and Home Rule for Bengal—would the world be set aflame in hostilities.

But with an exclamation of ironical contempt he put the notion of war far from him. It was all to end in arbitration. That was emphatically assured by the good sense and exalted humanitarian ideals inculcated during the long generous years of mutual goodwill and advancement among the nations. Had not Britain herself, the aggrieved party, already put forth a tentative proposal for mediation?

And Savill's thoughts, it may be said, corresponded in main to those voiced by the majority of the National Labour Party. Peace as well as War hath her oblivion.

§ 4

At the corner of Fleet Street and Ludgate Circus, the hansom had to slow down to allow a motor dray to pass in front, and Lesley caught a glimpse of Ferris, the *Suffrage* foreign-news editor, wearily hurrying down towards Ludgate Station, homeward bound for a few hours.

"Hello! just getting home?" Savill cried, motioning to the driver to draw in on the curb. "Have you had the Calcutta news?"

"Yes! Had to stay and get it in full before I left. Beastly affair! Just like the '57 atrocities. If Reuter's wire is correct, it is the awakening."

"Is it possible," Savill exclaimed in a horrified voice, "that it's as bad as that? And what about the Japs?"

"Going to raise trouble all round. You'll find European complications cropping up in the next day or two. This Peace Conference here is the grimmest farce possible. We've already sent out East the first of our men; they just managed to catch this morning's continental mail."

§ 5

Events were conspiring that day to agitate Savill, in common with fellow-Britons, into a state of feverish perturbation; but if he now resented Senator Stellman's peremptory call on his attention as unwarranted and entailing the loss of much begrudged time—before the morning was much older others, and these certain Government officials, were to congratulate themselves on the American's thoughtfulness.

"Two ladies waiting for you, sir. Been here since

four o'clock. Mrs. Dreischer, sir, and a young lady. They sent off a wire to you at Winsted Hall," the night porter still on duty at No. 10A, Whitehall Court, announced to Lesley as the latter passed quickly through the hall to the lift.

"No message from Downing Street, Atkins?"

"Yes, sir. At half-past four we was rung up to tell you to go down first thing on coming back."

Savill wrinkled his brows, and stared at the lift's grille of beaten copperwork as it flashed past floor and floor, up towards his eyrie on the topmost story.

What had come about that necessitated his presence so urgently at No. 10 Downing Street? The Japanese ambassador must have lost no time in communicating the despatches from Tokio. If so, his very celerity in not delaying till the usual hours of official routine implied extreme tension in the diplomatic situation.

"Call up No. 10, Atkins, and say I'll be along directly," he cried, stepping out on to his landing.

But a flicker of a smile passed over his anxious face when he passed into the little lobby of his flat.

"Well! they seem to have made themselves at home," he muttered, the faint smack of an omelette catching his nostrils. "And coffee, too, by Jove."

For a moment or two he paused on the threshold of his sitting-room, and let his eye rest on his unexpected guests.

It was most evident from Mrs. Dreischer's attire, that she had had to make a hurried exit in search of him that morning.

She was lying asleep on the divan in a huddled, uncomfortable position under one of his travelling

rugs, a handkerchief shielding her eyes from the light. Beyond, from behind the half-shut door of the little pantry abutting on the kitchen lift, came a glimpse of a brown tweed walking skirt, as Miss Stellman busied herself to her heart's content over the electric chafing-dish.

"Well, you are a hospitable lot! Never thought of asking me to breakfast?" he cried briskly, stepping across to his sister. "What is this most important business that has turned both of you out of bed at the unearthly hour of four in the morning?"

Mrs. Dreischer sat up with a start, and blinked at him from her sleep-swollen eyes.

"Oh, you've come, Les! Of course, just when we're getting some breakfast ready," she exclaimed n a caustic voice, that speedily grew sharp with testiness. "Isobel has been in such a state of impatience, waiting for you about goodness knows what; she'll not breathe a word of it to me! Just fancy! me dragged out of bed at half-past three in the morning. She didn't even give me time to dress properly, but made me throw on this wretched old skirt and blouse."

But her plaint had fallen on deaf ears, for Savill had eagerly turned away to Miss Stellman.

"Quite an unexpected invasion, this," he exclaimed, a cordial note in his wondering voice, as he shook hands with her. "Your message missed getting me at home, but I received it as I came up by rail."

"Yes! A cable to give you from father. I was to deliver it as early as possible," said Isobel in answer to his inquiring eyes. "I got it a little after three o'clock, and thought of everything imaginable till I managed to decode it; then of course I roused Aunt Dreischer there, just right away, and came here."

"I think the whole affair is absurdly improper," came from the far end of the sitting-room, where Mrs. Dreischer, now standing before the mirror above the fireplace, tidying her crumpled and ridged attire with many a little pat and pull. "You should have seen the night porter's face, Les, when we turned up for you. The man was positively shocked. But, whatever can the Senator have to say to you?"

Isobel gave a significant gesture of her head, drawing attention to the cablegram in her left hand.

"You and I had better read it alone, Mr. Savill. It seems just foolish to me, but pater—well, he's no fool! He has hit on something."

"I can give you only a minute or so at the very most, Miss Stellman," Savill replied, leading the way into his private sanctum, the little bookroom and study overlooking the gardens, embankment and busy Thames opposite St. Thomas' Hospital. "I'm sorry to have to run away again, but Downing Street has rung up for me."

As Isobel unfolded the cablegram, he glanced with kindling interest at the finely chiselled profile of her strong though mobile face. He caught himself trying to recall the hue of her eyes; eyes, yes, dark! To him they seemed to emphasize the sympathy, staunchness, kindness overlying her whole self. Emphatically an interesting specimen of American womanhood, he told himself—one intensely active in body and mind.

"You see, it is in code, Mr. Savill—a private one, father and I only can read. What has prompted him to send such odd news to me? Can you understand it?"

At her words Savill came back from wool-gathering.

With puzzled eyes he regarded the message, despatched from Washington D. C. at 10.33 p.m. Its cryptic meaning had been rendered word for word in Isobel's cramped back-hand.

"Just heard rice to be shipped from Swatow, Amoy, and Shanghai for delivery Formosa. Also Frisco Meat Trust, and Federated Coy. contracting for heavy demand canned foods, said to be for famine, same destination. Immediately inform Mrs. Dreischer's brother at Downing Street, privately, for official cognition. Growing tension here about Philippines. Gunrunning disclosures threatened by Democrat leaders. Future seems hazardous."

"'Official cognition,'" Savill repeated, "what on earth have we got to do with Japan's supplies for the Formosa famine. Yet, apparently he doesn't want the news to leak out or he would not have used you, Miss Isobel, as the intermediary.

"It is very good of you to have taken all this trouble," he said slowly. "But I really do not know what importance there is to be attached to it."

"Remember, Mr. Savill, my father is well inside the Foreign Bureau. He wants to convey some hidden warning, I think," said Isobel earnestly; "that is why I've hurried along with it. . . . This Japanese trouble you know."

But Savill shook his head, as he took the cablegram and put it in his pocket.

"There is no satisfactory explanation attached to it so far as I am yet aware. There is certainly a famine in Formosa; the Mansion House some time ago opened a fund in connexion with it. I am taking the cable with me, Miss Stellman. Perhaps, for all you and I know, the Senator may prove a friend indeed."

§ 6

Though it was not yet six o'clock on that sunny morning, already in Whitehall were thin crowds, mostly of men, straggling along in front of the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the headquarters of both services. A thick array of inquisitive spectators and journalists lined both sides of the opening into Downing Street, patrolled, clear of strangers, by a posse of mounted police. And as Savill hurried along, back to No. 10, he marked with a sudden chill at heart the carriage of Earl Montague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who still clung to the use of horses, rapidly disappearing up the ministerial thoroughfare.

"Morning, Savill! Up with the lark like the rest of us this morning. This scare is making us jump about, eh?"

Lesley halted on his heel, at the foot of the steps of the Hydrographic and Intelligence Department, Admiralty Buildings.

Eagerly he turned to the speaker, Commander Sullivan, R.N., who was stepping on to the pavement.

"Morning, Sullivan. I'm just in from the country, and going down. Any news?"

The commander looked at him, with a grave face. He came nearer and lowered his voice.

"Haven't you heard? I suppose I may tell you, Savill. As you're Mr. Marlborough's own secretary, you'll be hearing it in the next few minutes. We got word last night from the First Sea Lord to turn out early, in case he might want some information from us. And he does."

"What do you mean?" asked Savill in a sharp

voice, a shock of dread taking him. "What do you mean?"

"Just that the Japs have practically sent us an ultimatum. To all intents and purposes they've told us to apologise and pay an indemnity for their loss of life and so on. No arbitration! I tell you, it has given the Cabinet a 'oner' in the eye. We have just sent in a lot of figures and information."

Then, of a sudden, intense light illumed the secretary's understanding. He thrust Stellman's cablegram into the commander's hand.

"Yours is the official cognition for this then, Sullivan? It came to me this morning from an odd source, as you may see."

The Naval Intelligence Department officer flashed an eye over it. Surprise assailed him, then his face hardened. He took in a long breath, and looked keenly at the wondering secretary.

"By Jove! By Jove! This does show something of their hand. Yes, Savill, this is for us and plain enough reading too. With your permission, I'll trundle upstairs with it. It tells us, my dear man, the Japs are hurrying forward their supplementary rations. They intend to fight us—willy-nilly. It is coming at last, and they want to nip in before we can get at them. Savill, it is Australia that is their objective."

CHAPTER VI

EAST THE CHECKMATE

YES! It was coming at last—and that when least expected.

For years a few far-seeing English statesmen, wise in human nature and still wiser in those physiological and economic laws which sway national destinies, had continued to point out the dangers arising from the development of Japan as a world power in trade and armaments.

But only in New Zealand and the Commonwealth of Australia had their views been seriously considered. Britain lay too far from the centre of the impending typhoon and, moreover, revelling in the height of her present frenzy of maganimity and abnegation, she was insensible to symptomatic nerves.

There are few traits so selfish in many ways as self-humiliation!

Yet Japan, even as she once ordered herself so long and carefully for her defensive struggle against Russia, had since that epochic conflict as carefully ordered herself for taking the offensive against the British Empire, her sole rival throughout the Far East for predominance in more than commercialism. The same natural causes that in past centuries had inevitably compelled the expansion of Great Britain were now

as inevitably co-operating towards the expansion, the aggrandizement of the ambitions of Asia's Sea Empire. History does but repeat itself, cycle after cycle.

And Japan now believed the stars were fighting in her favour. To the Call of Destiny she had to succumb. The Sydney disaster it was, that, sounding as the roll of the drum, as the call of the clarion and bugle, forthwith set up in arms her intolerant martial instinct. It stirred her pride as a mighty and puissant nation. It awoke her to the pyschological occasion for hostilities.

§ 1

Here, in brief, are the contents of the despatches presented early that famous morning from Tokio to the Cabinet of St. James'—

(1) The payment of an indemnity in compensation of loss of life and property at Sydney: the amount of it to be fixed before December 31 by the Hague Peace Tribunal.

(2) The immediate trial of the Sydney authorities, civic and military, and their condign punishment.

(3) Lastly (and without a doubt to a great extent the real cause of the rupture), the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Mikado now stipulated that (*a*) the children of all Japanese throughout Australasia be not segregated for purposes of education, so that racial feeling on the "colour question would not continue to be accentuated but in time die away; that (*b*) the numbers of Japanese in each State *be not re-*

stricted, and that (*c*) all Japanese in Australasia, *whether or not native-born, be granted the municipal franchise as accorded to 'white' Australasians.*

(4) No Mediation would be entertained for a moment by Japan.

From 7 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. the Cabinet of His Britannic Majesty sat in close deliberation upon those terms of the Japanese Note.

Notwithstanding no word concerning them had as yet been issued to the nation, the ministers' prolonged council in itself went far to heighten public suspense and alarm. And as the radiant forenoon crept on, the way from Trafalgar Square to Westminster became blocked to carriage traffic by thousands of excited Britons, who, though as yet they occasioned no hysterical hubbub, no virulent demonstrations prompted by heated feelings, did by their very solidarity in restraint and patience give portentous indication as to how London looked upon the crisis.

"They are too quiet, Spencer! It is the calm before the storm," said Savill in a despondent voice to Mr. Marlborough's parliamentary secretary, who had found it a struggle to return from St. Stephen's. "You say the Whips are not troubling to call up members from both sides of the House?"

"There is no necessity," returned Spencer, busy with his crumpled collar and tie before the little antique mirror in the private secretary's room. "It's not one o'clock yet, but the members are trooping in, most of them coming by the river. They say Fleet Street and the far end of the Strand is almost

impassable owing to the crush before the newspaper offices. It's lucky the Stock Exchange is keeping its head. Any news from the Federal Council ? "

" Yes, a long message began to come in over an hour ago. The Cabinet Room is switched on to the Colonial Office to get the matter direct as they decode it off the wire. We are losing no time in this business," remarked Lesley, his mind reverting to yesterday's information from his stockbrokers. " How do national stocks stand, Spencer ? "

" Two-and-a-half consols down under seventy, I heard ; insurance against war risen to 28 per cent. for three months. There'll be no settling this question through pow-wowing I tell you. The educational question apart from the franchise. . . . The Australians have given the straight answer to them both, three times—' No.' It looks as if the Japs are forcing a row."

Savill opened his mouth to reply; but the next instant as the desk centre call-bell rang he thrust himself forward, out of his chair, and clapped the microphone to his ear. Spencer stood still watching him intently : and of a sudden Lesley's face froze into lines of perturbation and dismay.

" Quick, Spencer," he jerked out in a breathless voice, flinging out an arm towards the connexion board in the corner to his left. Quick ! " Admiralty and War Office shunts—number ones : both the Board Rooms. . . . It strikes me," he ejaculated, replacing the microphone—" it strikes me, the Committee of Defence is about to sit : I'd better get Mr. Marlborough's cypher notes in readiness for him."

With halted breath both secretaries looked at each other.

"We're apparently going through with it, Spencer," continued Lesley in a little hacking voice.

"We're apparently going through with it," repeated the secretary. "Something must have happened that is not yet divulged."

Through the open windows came the deep confused hum from crowded Whitehall, where perspiring constables were uselessly requesting all and sundry to move along. And above it rang with irritating emphasis the buzz of a wasp that had wandered in from the flowery walks of St. James' Park, to become enticed by the bunch of fragrant lilac on Savill's mantelpiece.

§ 2

Now it is not possible to afford information as to what transpired at the meeting of the Cabinet that morning, for of the deliberations of the British Cabinet no record is ever kept. Perhaps that ministers may the better secure themselves against the future, its challenges, its changes and surprises!

However, in the biography of Mr. Marlborough, published from the pen of Earl Montague, the only member of the Premier's own order in the National-Labour Cabinet, there is a brief and suggestive statement which enlightens ignorance on this point.

The noble lord distinctly avers that the attitude of the British Cabinet to the Japanese demands was at first one of acquiescence, partly from the knowledge that Sydney was somewhat culpable, but most of all as a result of the earnest appeals of the Prime Minister.

> 'Not to maintain so much Britain's prestige as to maintain peace and equity even at the cost

of reprobation from the enflamed sections of the Empire, and the temporary dimming of our prestige—temporary, till sanity and reason returned to both nations.'

These were Mr. Marlborough's strenuously asserted views as given by his former fellow-Minister, in the glimpse which he affords us of the momentous scene.

Yet no personal influence, no pervasive idiosyncrasy, could ever have prevailed against the force of the fresh news that was detailed in the Federal Council's asseverated refusal—a refusal, direct and trenchant—to assent to Article 3, clauses (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

That the suppression of this was needless, and that the 'murders,' together with the couchant hostility in the Japanese Note, had already effected a striking change of sentiment in the Commons is best vouched for by the fact that before their protracted sitting ended at 12.30 a.m. on June 3, they had passed a Vote of Credit, by a majority of 125, providing £2,500,000, and calling on the Government to hold the resources of the Empire in readiness for service "wherever and whenever they may be required." A wording that was to become endued with greater radii of application than most of the worthy members imagined!

A democracy is certainly disposed for peace. It however as certainly is, on the showing in past years of the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Australia, as delicately susceptible to sudden great extremes of national action as ever the most despotic autocracy.

§ 3

It was close on 1 a.m., on Friday, June 3, when Mr. Marlborough returned from St. Stephen's, that Savill got the first opportunity of conversing with him alone

Lesley had paused in his labours of preparing the mass of confidential figures and statements sent in by the War Office for the information of the Committee of Defence, which was to meet again that morning before further Cabinet deliberations. On account of the sultry weather the door and windows of his room were open, and with his head propped between his hands, his elbows on the blotting-pad before him, he was gazing wide-eyed into the night, yet unconscious of the wall on the further side of the street. He was listening, enwrapt for the moment, to the ceaseless murmuring and bursts of harsh-shredded sound rising from the excited crowds that were still surging along Whitehall, cheering on catching sight of a uniform or of any individual of public note, their more vehement members trying to address those nearest them, the good-natured, perspiring police always pushing them along and checking the harangues. Ah, ere long, even Londoners were to slacken in their craving for excitement and those things that prick the imagination, not to say the springs of hysteria.

"Ah, Savill! Listening to the muttering of the human beast which this tragedy is awakening for blood and slaughter?"

Lesley started, and immediately sprang to his feet on perceiving the Prime Minister standing in the doorway, his silk hat tilted over his brows, in his right hand the leather wallet containing his parliamentary papers.

The note of pathos unconsciously deepening, the tired voice went to Savill's heart; and at sight of the accentuated stoop in the broad shoulders, usually so braced and dominant, contrition took him. Lesley felt as if he had been detected in some guilty act.

"No, sir, not quite that," he exclaimed, instantly wheeling forward the deep armchair on the Premier stepping into the room. "I was thinking it was like a far-away roar of the sea."

"A true Englishman! Your thoughts in a crisis like this naturally turn to the sea. Not 'to the hills' but to the sea does Britain look for strength. . . . Oh, a starred question, I understand, is down for answer on Monday on the submarine matter and your brother's resignation. You have seen him?"

Savill flushed a little. He had realized that there was a certain and very obvious misconstruction to be put on his cleaving to his brother. In such a crisis as at present, naval policy became, what it too seldom is, a matter of national not party concern.

"Yes, sir, early yesterday morning, just before leaving Winsted. He and I——"

"An unfortunate business altogether," Mr. Marlborough went on restlessly, rising from the depths of the armchair with a characteristic heave of his body. "Well, I'll now lie down for a few hours. Give me my 1917 notes on the Bengal Self-Government; and these notes submitted to yesterday's Cabinet—prepare them for His Majesty's perusal this forenoon; I had better go over them before sending them down to Windsor. Immediately any further despatches come in, Savill, bring them up to me."

It was the last, even of a comparative calm.

For soon were to sound out in all tragic dramaticness, now high now low, now in defeat and now jubilantly triumphant, the drums and tramplings of world-wide hostilities.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK

THE SECOND BOOK

CHAPTER I

IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

GREAT BRITAIN in the first days of the national catastrophe passed, as has been told, through a state of ferment and excitement. Yet her ebullience was slight compared to that seething in the cities of Bengal and the crowded Ganges Valley. A state not inexplicable! For ever since 1905–6 such disloyal feeling and political bias have been constantly shown in public and in private throughout Bengal and the discontented parts of Eastern Bengal and Assam as ought to have put the Keeper of India on guard.

The outbreak at Jehellapur on the afternoon of June 1, though originating more in local grievances than intrigues, soon proved to be the forerunner of thinly disguised insurrection. In it was soon to be fractured that thin, very thin, veneer of Western civilization, on which the claim for self-control had been superimposed by the Bengali.

§ 1

The Sydney emeute the scurrilous Hindu and Mohammedan press had instantly seized upon; they

issued grossly exaggerated reports. These, however, did give something of an echo of the truth when contrasted with the tales circulating in the bazaars. There, nine out of every ten natives believed that the Japanese had swept across Sydney and were holding New South Wales at the point of the sword.

Throughout the two provinces mass meetings were convened as if by magic. "Asia for the Asiatics and Bengal for her rights," "No taxation without Bengal control," were clamoured by the excited thousands. They were vehemently harangued on that point by Hindoos, baboos and others, who had spent their years in Japanese schools and universities; for at these centres, as far back as 1906–7, special facilities had been granted to Indian students. And at more than one of these meetings aggressive propagandists of the Monto sect from Kioto, Japan, were prominent if passive figures on the platforms.

As the agitation swiftly spread, at Allahabad, Patna, Dacca, Dingapur, and other cities, white men and women were openly insulted in the bazaars and streets; and there were disturbances between Mohammedan and Hindoo, which on June 3 in two instances, at Moorshedabad and Patna, culminated in the troops having to fire on the mobs.

Significant news appeared in the "white" press of increasing desertions from the native regiments; of an epidemic of rifle stealing; of railway signals put out of gear, and obstructions endangering the lines for trains in transit; also, of the disastrous derailment of a heavy military train between Benares and Mirzapur, while conveying the 67th Battery R.F.A. Officially this was announced as an accident; but

railway men on the spot stated that the chairs and stepping spokes had been tampered with.

At home Anglo-Indians spoke darkly of an imminent outbreak more terrible than that of 1857; and in the Commons, late on Friday night, the Secretary for India, Mr. John Emmett, himself an ardent "progressive," had declined to commit himself to the expression of any opinion pending the receipt of news from the Viceroy. The native regiments, he announced, were sound; yet—as the Leader of the Opposition reminded him—the same assurances had been given in 1857, with the sequence, a few weeks later, of the officers being massacred on their own parade ground.

Then on the early forenoon of Sunday, churchgoers wending their way down Whitehall towards Westminster Abbey marked to their wonder a short rank of automobiles lined up alongside the pavement in front of the War Office. The Minister of War and Army Council colleagues were being hurriedly called together. The Viceroy had appealed urgently for reinforcements.

The same night there was issued to the public a brief summary of his telegraphed despatches—they contained the above information—together with the latest of the Tokio negociations. Not since the Fashoda crisis, October 9, 1898, had despatches of this kind been issued on a Sunday night; and at the clubs, newspaper offices, and great restaurants where the latest news was posted, there was a ferment of excitement. What was about to happen?

One concession had now been made by the Japanese Government. To abet Britain's desire for arbitration Japan now conceded the proposition that the

question of the parliamentary status of the many thousands of Japanese in Australia be submitted for adjudication to the Peace Tribunal at the Hague, both parties to abide loyally by the decision. Upon the British constitutional claim of "No taxation without representation" was the case for Japan to be founded.

With reference to this development, His Majesty's Government now awaited reply from the Commonwealth. But as regards India they had taken instant measures to maintain law and order.

Aldershot early that Sunday afternoon had been precipitated into a state of startled hurly-burly and excitement, the force there being drawn upon for immediate embarkation. Eight battalions, six batteries, four cavalry regiments, and details of departmental troops were now under sudden orders to embark by the 10th.

§ 2

But it was on the morning of Monday, June 5, that optimists in Britain experienced their first sensational shock of the imminence of hostilities.

Hardly were business offices opened when, from the headquarters of the cable companies operating east and west from Australia, a curt notice was issued to the effect that by a special order on Sunday night the Federal Council had authorized their Minister of War and Defence to pre-empt all foreign communications for four-and-twenty hours, pending the establishment of a military censorship.

London and the diplomatic and commercial centres abroad were dumfoundered. In vain did banks,

and insurance, and mining and other influential companies harry the Colonial Office for information. "There is none to give," was the reply. Even yet, hopes of peace ran high in the breasts of thousands. As testimony thereto a band of emphatic pacificists in Fleet Street smashed the windows of the *Daily Chronicle* Office, where was displayed its midday edition, the column of Australian news a conspicuous blank, down which was printed in scare type—'Britain! This means war.'

Four hours later, the historic scene took place at St. Stephen's, when the last, the critical statement concerning the swiftly culminating crisis was set forth to the Commons by Mr. Marlborough.

It was plain he laboured under deep emotion. His sympathetic if critical audience also marked that for the first time in his parliamentary career he constantly referred to the slips lying on the despatch box before him.

His speech—is it not to be found in full in every daily paper that was rushed out, from Plymouth to Aberdeen, within five minutes of its conclusion? Yet to refresh the memory its principal heads are given, from *Hansard*, much condensed, owing to the exigencies of this narrative.

1. The Commonwealth again returned her categorical refusal to submit the Japanese question in any of its aspects to the judgment of Europe's Peace Tribunal.

2. She furnished details relating to further significant incidents—(*a*) The Japanese colonies at Port Darwin and Malmesbury had on the 4th

broken into open insurrection. (*b*) Coolies employed along the north-west coast between Nichol and Roeburne had left their compounds, and were congregating at Hampton Harbour opposite the Dampier Islands. (*c*) There, various caches of arms and munitions of war, undoubtedly of Japanese make, had just been discovered by Commonwealth preventive craft.

3. Authenticated information had reached the Intelligence Bureau of the Australian War and Defence Department that—(*a*) The vessels of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, the Mitsu Bishi, the Toyo Kisen Kaisha and the Kwen Kisen Kaisha steamship companies had been requisitioned as Government transports. Heavy shipments of rice and other service food-stuffs were being made for Takow and Japan. (*c*) The Japanese service centres at Kure, Kobe, Shikoki, and Yokohama were now working at full pressure.

4. Consequent on these important news the Commonwealth was now taking steps to mobilize her naval and military defences, and the censorship was being instantly applied.

Amidst a dead silence Mr. Marlborough concluded his reading of the despatches; he paused for a little to drink of the tumblerful of ice-water standing on the despatch box before him. The silence of the crowded Commons was pregnant with expectancy.

When the Premier resumed his speech, his voice was changed. A singular vehemence charged it. A strong undernote of pathos rang through it. It was the strangulated death-knell of his splendid

career as the Archegonist of Peace. Henceforth he was to sound the tocsin of War.

Ah, the tragedy of it.

PRIME MINISTER,—

I now have but to say, His Majesty's Government has communicated the decision of His Commonwealth of Australia to the Government of His Majesty the Mikado. It has asked for an adequate and immediate explanation as to the small arms seized on the Dampier Islands; and as the Japanese Government has always apparently desired the retention of His Majesty the Mikado's sovereignty over Japanese emigrants—thus extending a latent and impossible political sovereignty over the countries to which they are sent—His Majesty's Foreign Minister has pointed out that this attitude is incompatible with the claim put forth for the franchise.

Pending the reply we are taking full measures to maintain the safety of the Empire and the vital interests of Australasia. Such drastic action—I know, I feel, all parties and the Empire at large regret whole-heartedly—consists in the immediate mobilization of both military forces of the Crown.

With the historic prelude to the Manchurian Disaster still fresh in mind—when Japan landed troops in Korea, and attacked and destroyed two Russian ships of war anterior to the declaration of hostilities—when she obstructed telegraphic communications and captured Russian merchantmen previous to diplomatic relations being severed; with her latter-day evasive diplomacy and juggling with commercial rights in Manchuria and Korea affecting British

trade and interests there;—the Government of Great Britain, notwithstanding its pacific character, was fully justified in marshalling Her strength. It was for the last and most potent appeal—War.

§ 3

There were no days now of confusion and inextricable chaos when the army reserves were called out, together with half of the territorial forces; no new order had to be painfully evolved as in the first half of the South African Campaign. The British Army was now based on real territorial organization, corresponding somewhat to that prevailing in the great military States of the Continent; and thus mobilization became a comparatively simple matter.

Reservists streamed into the depôt town of their territorial district, where the unit they belonged to was either in garrison, or based in skeleton upon the requisite stores; and when this unit was locally completed it proceeded by rail to the point of concentration. The central authority at Whitehall had not to trouble itself with all that innumerable and intricate detail, which had wasted so much valuable time and brain power in the muddleheaded arrangements of old.

It was found, however, in a day or two, that certain characteristics still prevailed. Without a doubt, they were racial characteristics, engendered by the Briton's inherent contempt for the future.

At the War Office it was discovered that for the cavalry, yeomanry, and artillery an alarming dearth of mounts was setting in; the ever extending use of

the motor in the last twenty years having all but eradicated the best reserve of horses throughout Britain. No longer could the Inspector-General of Cavalry by one stroke of his pen transfer 10,000 horses from the London omnibus companies and 20,000 from the railways. Thousands of yeomanry discovered they were not mounted infantry but dismounted cavalry. Many of the horses had been doing double, nay, often triple duty. For instance, a West-End liveryman had for years hired the same steady-going charger to a yeoman for his training, then a fortnight later to a major of volunteers for a week's camp, and after that to a colonel of the Artillery Volunteers for the yearly inspection. All the time the mount was being registered for the army reserve; so that on mobilization four different people claimed the animal.

As June 10 approached it became plain, too, that war-service stores were swiftly dwindling under the indents for shipment abroad and the mobilization at home, reserves of them having been strictly curtailed consequent on the European Peace Propaganda.

Contracts were instantly entered into; but, even at the greatly enhanced war prices, adequate and dependable supplies were not forthcoming at home. Private firms having obtained but little Government support, owing to the general restriction of armaments, home and foreign, and the development of State arsenals as a sop to nation-labour tendencies, had turned their attention into other and more remunerative channels. There was now a very restricted alternative source of supply in the case of torpedoes, as well as guns, ships, and other warlike implements. Urgent orders had at once to be placed with Krupp and

Ehrhardt, with Solingen and Schneider, and the great steel and munition companies in the United States.

§ 4

But if the mobilization of military units, if not of material, was to proceed relatively smartly and smoothly, it was wholly otherwise with the Navy.

Too much in these later years had Britain's 'one long mobile arm' been made the subject of party contentions, of change and counter-change, of reductions and economies that seem so pettifogging and puerile when national existence is at stake. Yet, as was soon to be voiced by both leading parties in the Houses of Parliament, the Will of the People had been but obeyed; Burke's axioms had been too faithfully followed; and national affairs were adjusted no longer according to statesmanship and statecraft, but to human nature and the general sense of the community; and that, by 1920, had been indulged to the full in sententious humanitarian and collectivist experiments. The so-called "gas and water" socialists of Mr. Marlborough's younger days had been successfully placated by him and his colleagues in their ardent desire to reap the fruits of office.

Paramount, however, in the present situation, that n a few days was to precipitate a crisis involving the stability of Europe herself, were the difficulties in calling in the British naval reserve.

Enlistment for five years of lower deck ratings, introduced in 1905 with the view to building up a strong reserve, had since 1909 been utilized by successive Governments for the creation of "a reserve, a strong, immeasurably strong reserve, and ships with nucleus

crews, now so maintained as to be ready for sea within three days' notice." With an adroit eye, too, towards reducing the heavy aggregate sum of retaining moneys payable to the many thousands of naval reservists, the State had given special inducements in order to draw them into British forecastles, thus ousting alien seamen.

When long-unlooked-for mobilization came at last, the Admiralty, as predicted, found itself confronted with a situation similar to that so embarrassing Pall Mall in 1899–1900.

Reservists overseas on hearing the news, immediately reported themselves to the nearest British consul, who in turn requested from the Admiralty orders as to their destination. By the time, then, this information filtered through, in many cases either the steamer had sailed or the naval base to which the reservists had been sent was now denuded of the designated vessel and her squadron—as at the Australasian ports, and at Hong-Kong, Colombo, Simon's Bay, the Indian and other bases. The naval reservists abroad numbered thousands, the abolition of the Coastguards in favour of a Customs preventive force having swelled their numbers and robbed the Admiralty of 4,300 ratings that aforetime would have been available for immediate use in manning nine to ten vessels of the line.

Already, however, on June 5 nine of the sixteen 26-knot ships of the line comprising the Channel Fleet, off Portland, had been detached with orders to ship war stores on a full scale at Gibraltar and, reinforced by the six homogeneous vessels of the Mediterranean Squadron, to proceed viâ Suez for Far Eastern waters. The Atlantic Fleet, too, eight ships of the

line and six cruisers, then cruising off Berehaven, had been directed to proceed at full speed, viâ Colon and Panama, for the Pacific and Australasian waters; while the Cape of Good Hope and the East India Squadron, then at the Mauritius, had received instructions to move up on Aden for convoy duty eastward to Bombay.

It was upon the British China Squadron—now a much attenuated force, consequent on the expansion of the Australasian marine, and at the time of the outbreak coming leisurely south after a round of gay festivities at Petropaulski, the heavily fortified base of Russia's Second Pacific Squadron—that there was to be instantly sprinkled the red and murderous baptism of war.

CHAPTER II

INTRIGUES AND ALARMS

LONDON in the succeeding days of June, 1920, was like the other great seats of British Empire. She gathered round the ganglions of government and administration. She was stirred with excitement and almost every phase of surmise.

Great numbers of her professional classes and working masses on ending their day's task, instead of betaking themselves homeward, to the gay garden cities or comfortable residential centres spreading throughout the home counties, eagerly thronged westward up Fleet Street and along Whitehall; and there till nightfall they lingered in their impatient zest for the news and rumours which went to swell and quicken the breaking wave of exasperation, of animus directed against Japan.

To the British public, as also to unbiassed observers abroad, many signs, old and new, now seemed to point to a long and deliberately concerted scheme for precipitating a war against Great Britain. Yet negociations still dragged along.

§ I

To Lesley Savill, on the evening of June 10, after he had passed out of the Palace Yard entrance from

the Commons, the sight of the crowded pavements and the dense ranks of people came with peculiar force.

The afterglow of sundown had faded from the sky, here and there a star was gleaming jewel-like through the rifts of heat haze; and the imperturbable brilliancy of the electric lights ranging away up towards Whitehall illumed what to him appeared to be an endless vista of sidewalks and laggard omnibuses and open passenger cars thronged with Londoners perturbed, enfevered by the issues now being presented to the Country at large. Savill tilted his hat over his brows, with a savage gesture.

Coming from the heated scenes in the Commons, where Mr. Marlborough, juggling his Parliamentary craftsmanship, had just succeeded in obtaining his further Vote of Credit, £18,000,000, for additional military and naval expenditure—but this time only through inducing the majority of the Opposition to vote with the Government, thus defeating the efforts of the extreme Socialist and Democrat members of the National Labour Party who had joined the cross-bench members in the Opposition Lobby—the secretary's prevailing thoughts had been of the responsibilities resting on the shoulders of the Premier and his Cabinet. The bitter, rasping tones of 'Jim' Saunders, workman and Socialist member for Camlachie, his burly figure, massive face, and long tawny beard still remained vividly in Savill's recollection, "My honourable friends, on both sides the House, it is neither the men nor the money I am thinking of; it is our women an' children. The barren fireside an' vacant chair, the empty cupboard, an' the pile of pawn-tickets which I know will be there—these will be the 'Glories of our birth and state'; these will be the

result of this heinous, this bestial cry, for war . . . I am thinking of the widow and orphan. . . ."

But as Savill now crossed over into Parliament Street snatches of conversation and comment, discussion, argument, fell on his ear from the groups of onlookers, many of them flushed and excited; and a feeling of aggravation and wrath filled him—at the obfuscation of the lower-class mind—the very mind, he told himself, Mr. Marlborough had given his best years to quickening and enlarging.

"Young M'albr'gh, yus, mates, I call 'im young," grunted a crusty wrinkle-faced workman, holding forth to the men about him, empty dinner cans in hand and still clad in their working jeans, "young M'albr'gh, I say, 'e 'as been playin' all them years of 'is peace an' harbitration into the sticky 'ands of them little ochre-faced Chinks.". . . "Wot I say is this," came vigorously from a seafaring man, centre of an argumentative cluster, round which Savill had to shove his way. "Here we have them Japs astorin' arms an' so on on the Dampiers, an' if they hevn't got more on the Barrier Reef islan's to east'ard, they're demn fools. But wot heve they bin adoin' all them past years? W'y, spyin', spyin', all round. They heve us up a pole now, an' we'll know it demn soon." . . . "Right, old Nept'ne," replied some one. "W'y didn't the Guver'ment stop it at the fust—w'en that old josser Kamimewra aired his bloomin' knowledge o' Melbourne Bay? W'y didn't they, eh? 'Cause. . . ." But as Savill hurried along towards Downing Street the heated voice became lost in the multitudinous roar of the struggling traffic.

A police inspector standing by the steps of the

New Exchequer buildings, recognized Savill, and saluted as he passed.

"Not much shoulder-room here, inspector!"

"No, sir, not much, and still less good temper! A couple of Japs came along, just 'alf-an-hour ago, strutting it like a pair of bantam cocks, sir; and we had to call out assistance from Scotland Yard; they were getting badly hustled—and jujitsu tricks ain't much good in a crush! There's a cool un, sir! Just see him—walking across there, with all them cars and buses like to run him down!"

A flicker of admiration and amusement passed over Savill's face on observing the foot passenger. Making his way towards Westminster, and evidently in a hurry, he was smartly dodging a motor dray and a steam-omnibus lumbering a hair's-breadth past him. Then a feeling of recognition took Lesley as his eyes dwelt on the darting figure. The next instant, he was cutting across the street, running in and out of the two thick streams of traffic.

As he was closing on the stalwart, erect figure, the front mud guard of an electric hansom, that was turning in sharp towards the curb opposite Messrs. Grindlay & Coy., Bankers, caught him on the hip, and flung him forward into its path. With a grab at his shoulder, the stranger jerked him back, unharmed.

"A close shave, eh? By Jove! Les! Where have you sprung from? The very man I am seeking."

"I thought it was you," Lesley panted, regaining breath, and warmly shaking hands with his brother, Major Savill. "When did you come back from San Sebastian? I'm going back to Downing Street; and by mere chance got a glimpse of you. Look out! Dodge this trap coming down on us, and let's get on

to the pavement. . . . The crush is not so heavy here. Well, you've rushed back from the Continent to get on active service again, old chap; they have called you up?"

"Can't say yet, Les. I haven't seen my letters for the last week. To be plain with you, I want to see you—urgently. I've just come off the International express, landed my traps in at your place, Whitehall way, found you were not at Number Ten; and was coming on to the House, to try and get you there. Come along to your flat, Les. We can't talk here."

His brother's grave, anxious tones and earnest face took Lesley aback.

"Nothing wrong? Is it Jim's affair? It was dealt with in a starred question last Monday night—the Chatham member's. The Admiralty shows a judicious attitude."

Lesley's words reached his brother in desultory patches as they threaded their way past a crowd that was pushing and shoving about an auto-car from which the 9 p.m. edition of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was being rapidly sold. "Extra Speshal. Vote of Credit—Eighteen Millions passed."

To the major the raucous words came with more than prophetic significance.

"Wrong!" he jerked back, as they closed together again. "Ye'll be able to judge for yourself. Except for a few minutes' stop in Paris this afternoon, I've been travelling for twenty hours on end, to bring the news here—in case our Intelligence Department hasn't got it. There is more behind this Japanese business than we even suspect. And God help England, Lesley, if that is true. We'll soon be in an awful mess."

§ 2

With a look of wonder, Lesley watched Major Savill unlock his handbag, and tumble out a collection of maps and papers on the sitting-room table.

"What in the world are you after, Arthur ?" he asked in a somewhat testy voice. "Is this mystery of yours really so all-pressing. Remember, I have no time to fool away ; there's five hours' work at Downing Street yet for me before I get to bed."

"You'll soon be told all about it," replied his brother in a significant tone, that seemed to indicate some unknown menace. "Clear the desk of that escritoire for me. You don't seem to use this snug place of yours very much now, by its appearance ; too busy with this Japanese trouble ? We'll have to thrash them. Hullo, Les, how came this 'feminine' thing here ? Been entertaining fair ladies, eh, gay dog ?"

Lesley lifted the lace scarf that lay conspicuously in the centre of the blotting pad on the desk of the escritoire, where the chambermaid had placed it to draw his attention. Shaking his head in mute surprise, he considered it with puzzled eyes. Then suddenly a smile broke over his face, and he began carefully refolding it.

"Why, Arthur," he said triumphantly, in extenuation, "it is Isobel Stellman's ; I know that by the faint fragrance about it. Winnie and she were here some days ago. Of course, it's hers !"

A shade of amusement passed over the major's grave face ; and for an instant his hard-bitten features relaxed as he observed how carefully Lesley inserted

the trophy of Miss Dreischer's visit into an envelope and sealed it up.

"We'll soon be dancing at your wedding, Les?" he returned briskly, smoothing out a stained and creased map of the Lower Rhine which he had stretched out on the desk. "Now, now, don't protest, don't get indignant; I hear she's a regular 'clipper' and game to the very heels of her. . . . But, look here, Lesley; at the Brabant frontier of Holland—Pannerden, and so on, on the Rhine; Wesel, the German base, further up, and Dusseldorf, the headquarters of the Kaiser's lately established river flotilla of so-called 'preventive' gunboats. You follow my pencil mark up-river. Well, the Germans are massing their forces there *for the march upon Holland.*"

Lesley checked his breathing for a moment or two. He turned an incredulous face on his brother.

"Come now, Arthur," he complained reproachfully, pulling quizzical eyebrows at him; "have we not got our fill of trouble—without you bringing this mare's nest along? You know as well as I do, that both France and Britain by that Triple Treaty of 1917 stand guarantors for the security and independence of the Netherlands."

"Yes, I know that. And the same old intrigues of the Pan-German party in Holland, that brought about the Triple Treaty, are affording the pretext for the Kaiser to pour his troops over the border. Germany is hand-in-glove, too, with Japan, Lesley."

The secretary suddenly straightened himself. The warnings of Ferris, the *Suffrage's* foreign-news editor; the sudden alarming fall of British stocks on the Berlin Bourse the hour before news of the Sydney disaster reached London; the singularly detailed

knowledge of Prinz von Saxbauer, the German Ambassador, concerning the negociations with Japan—all flashed into the clear white light of his perception. Yet instantly he chid himself for his suspicions.

"But, Arthur," he remonstrated impetuously, "Germany, even Germany—and through her shuffling at the Peace Conferences we know what she is—she can't go to war without some colour of a just cause. She's been moving no troops. This is a chimera of yours."

"It is no chimera of mine," came the grim reply, "it's you Pacificists that suffer from chimeras. She is going into Holland to 'protect Holland from herself' and incidentally to seize her colonies and seaports for 'administrative purposes.' I wrote you early in April, I was going north for a few weeks touring in Westphalia and Hanover; as a matter of fact, I had a companion with me, a member of the French Intelligence Department. What we have not picked up—and we kept our eyes and ears busy, I tell you—his agents reported to him *en route*. I was within an ace of being shot at Wesel. Oh, don't trouble about that! I can't get into the humdrum grove at San Sebastian. Give me some risks in life."

"But what do you know?" interrupted Lesley.

"At Dusseldorf, two-thirds of the river gunboats have been gradually protected with armour while in dock at the river arsenal to undergo repairs. At Goch and at Wesel, military supplies are accumulating. And since June 1, the Westphalian and Hanover army corps have been quietly raised above peace strength by calling in large numbers of reserves for 'fresh instruction in some amended drills.' The same blind is being used for strengthening the French frontier

corps, and, I daresay, the forces throughout Germany. She means war—if the Japs really tackle us. Man, here is the copy of notes, jotted down as soon as we were safe on French soil!"

Heatedly Major Savill struck the momentous packet against the palm of his other hand. But Lesley was staring at the map, with knitted brows and frowning eyes.

If this were true, he told himself, England then was soon to be engaged in hostilities with the two hardest fighting nations in the world. England with her striking force almost wholly depleted in reinforcement of India and Egypt. England with her two most powerful squadrons already speeding every hour further from home shores, on towards Australia. England, the mother of nations, the high-priestess of peace, with her populace now more averse than ever to the profession of arms.

"Oh, God," Lesley murmured, through clenched teeth, "let not this be true."

§ 3

It was the jangling, in the little lobby of the flat, of the telephone bell, that brought this interlude to an abrupt close.

"Yes, I am Savill," the major heard his brother abruptly return over the wire; and then noted the instant change in his tones. "Yes, sir, coming at once. Just been getting very grave news, sir. May I bring my informant across? I think it is better you should hear it at once. Yes . . . exceedingly grave."

The flurried, white face of Lesley as he re-entered the room belied his decisive bearing.

"Cabinet meeting hurriedly called for ten-thirty to-night. Mr. Marlborough has turned up at Number Ten: I should have been well into some work for him," he laconically explained. "Bundle up these things, Arthur, and bring them along. Oh, it's all right! The Premier is like William Pitt—he likes to get communications first-hand."

As the two brothers were hastening into Whitehall the sound of tumultuous cheering filled the air, mingling with the strains of a military band playing a lively march—it was the "Lincolnshire Poacher"—a phalanx of onlookers filled the pavements, and innumerable hats and hands were being waved. Opposite the mouth of Whitehall Place the occupants of two crowded omnibuses, blocked there, broke out into 'Rule Britannia' and wild flag-waving.

"What's the hubbub for, Les?"

"The third battalion, Border Regiment, I expect, just arrived from Carlisle, bound for Gib to take the place of the 1st King's Rifles; it has been ordered to proceed to Egypt. Dover viâ Victoria is their destination, I believe. The last of the Aldershot 'striking force' is sailing from Southampton in the morning."

"They might have sent them round London by rail, instead of tiring the poor beggars out at this time of night," growled the major, his eye resting critically on the rank and file.

Even the enthusiasm of the metropolis had failed to give them elasticity of step and brisk bearing.

"You are right in that," replied his brother, "but I think the Army Council is taking every chance it

can to work up some public enthusiasm in Tommy Atkins. This new democracy of ours looks upon him more as a military police, than anything else, for use abroad. Here's a break, Arthur, in the column. Let's cut across. I'll square the police."

§ 4

Savill found Mr. Marlborough, in the Cabinet Room, that large pillared chamber overlooking the Horse-Guards' Parade. Leaning against the capacious leather chair by the centre writing-table, he was searching in the pages of a manuscript volume, one of many which he had taken down from the book-case to the right of the fireplace. From a glance at the room on entering, the secretary concluded that the unexpected council of ministers was to be held either at the Foreign Office or the House of Commons.

As the Premier looked up, Lesley stepped forward, but at sight of the weary, heavy face, his heart smote him; a flood of bitter feeling choked him. He felt irritated at himself, at his family, that so strangely had become associated with the untoward in State matters. He recoiled from the responsibility of putting forward his brother.

"What is this that has kept you back, Savill? I wanted in particular to run over my basic notes on that suggested treaty of defence and amity between us and the United States—the one Senator Stellman took such a leading part in. I hope my notes are not down at Pewsey Chase?"

"No, sir, they are here. What has kept me back was having some information from the Continent thrust

on me. I think it is quite unknown at the Foreign Office."

"Unknown at the Foreign Office, Savill! What is this you raise? The world seems to ring with nothing but rumours and alarm?"

Mr. Marlborough, with chin dropped, alert beady eyes, and bent brows, asked the question in all ironical suavity—much as a forbear of his might have done, sitting in that identical room not so many years ago. And perhaps it was the undisguised hauteur in the Premier's manner that sharply jogged his private secretary's democratic traits.

"I don't raise anything, sir! It is my brother, Major Savill, who has obtained startling information on the Continent. The same information has just been lodged with the French Intelligence and Foreign Offices, sir. He——"

Lesley stopped, then sprang forward.

The volume had slipped from Mr. Marlborough's hold; with closed eyes and bloodless face he sat there, breathing heavily. But the next instant he recovered himself, and bent down to pick up the minutes, then stood erect—defiant of Fate.

"I am all right, Savill, thank you. I know, I know what is coming. It is that Germany . . . Holland?"

Mute in his sympathy Savill stood before him, and nodded confirmation of the Premier's surmise. Days and nights now had it haunted him, paramount even over the Far Eastern menace.

Mr. Marlborough took a turn or two up and down the room as if to regain calmness of mind. His tense, white face came and went in the soft obscurity beyond the reading-lamp. It was with a savage gesture

of his clenched fist that he turned again to his secretary.

"Yesterday, for the second time, the French Ambassador assured us all was well. This morning, Sir Edward Danby reports the same from Berlin. Our Secret Intelligence assured the War Office the same: the Admiralty possessed only your naval brother's report concerning the German submarine he was thought to have encountered in the Spring."

"Why, sir," cried Lesley in amazement, "on the morning of the second, when I was down at Winsted, there was a casualty thought to have been caused through some German submarine spying about. My father took down the depositions; I was present at two of them."

Mr. Marlborough halted on his heel, and shook his head emphatically. He continued laconically:

"Nothing heard of that at the Admiralty or Foreign Office. The report'll have been pigeonholed somewhere by some officious Pacificist." He bit his lip at that; the 'officious Pacificist' had to a great extent followed the First Commoner's own procedure. "Your brother is within call?"

"Yes, sir. I took the liberty of bringing him here, in case you want to question him."

But Mr. Marlborough had not heard his reply. Already with his strong vision and rapid power of generalization pulsing through his mind, he was reconsidering the international aspect; he stared at the circle of light cast about the writing-table by the lamp as if magnetized. Noiselessly Lesley turned away to the great writing-cabinet before the bookcases standing between the two north-west windows:

environs hallowed by the great Liberal Prime Minister of the nineteenth century.

The Premier's strident voice made him turn quickly.

"Savill, you will do this at once, immediately you have sent your brother in to me, and looked out the notes I require. In fact, you'd better direct Spenser to get me them, so as to allow you to do at once what I am about to ask. You will put yourself in communication with Senator Stellman, and request him—not in my name, of course—to inform you as to the prospects of concluding forthwith a treaty of *offensive and defensive alliance* embracing both Asia and Europe. Stellman is fully in touch with all parties there on this question. In particular I want to gauge the weight of their pro-German sentiment. You clearly understand me, Savill. We must have perfect secrecy in the matter."

If Mr. Marlborough's slow, precise utterance went far to impress Savill as to the singular portentousness of his instructions and their issues, the 'we' grappled him with hooks of steel, so unconsciously human was the appeal. Just by such human touches had Mr. Marlborough drawn the same response of co-operation from the nation during his political career.

"Yes, sir, I understand," replied the secretary, striving to read the Premier's harassed face in the confusing half-light about him. "There is ten-fifteen striking, sir."

"I am just going back to the Commons for the council meeting, but will see Major Savill now. He has not imparted his information to the Intelligence?"

"No, sir. He is not attached to them at all, and thought it advisable to evade any circumlocution. . . ."

In truth the new democratic blood infused into

Government offices was as dilatory, as lacking in public spirit, and as jealously tenacious of routine as ever in former days; and if the first 'labour' Premier of Great Britain sometimes preferred to get facts 'first-hand' he was but reverting to a custom of his greatest predecessor, the Earl of Chatham.

Like President Roosevelt, Mr. Marlborough had discovered that as yet Demos most emphatically did not possess governing instincts save in predatory directions. As Demos has lived so he rules—for the day and the fruits thereof.

CHAPTER III

THREADS OF LIFE AND DEATH

WHILE Lesley quickly traversed St. James's Park in the direction of Park Terrace, Number 8, the London residence of Caleb Dreischer, Esq., managing director of the New York, Panama, and San Francisco Steam Shipping Company, with its colossal ramifications, he vainly endeavoured to formulate his details of campaign against Senator Stellman. One point appeared clear to him—decisively clear. It was to be only through Miss Stellman herself that he could approach the wary member of Senate.

"*Ev'nin' Standard*, sir? 'Further Outrages in Indyer an' Egypt.'"

The call of the cyclist newsboy flying past along the dim drive brought him back to the more hateful realities, and eagerly he disembursed his penny.

'Further Outrages?' The scant details cabled home were blazoned forth to Britain's millions in the brief paragraphs studding the stop-press column.

At Poona that afternoon, men and officers of the first battalion of the Hampshire Regiment had been openly attacked in cantonments by rioters, who had stood up against the fusillade immediately poured

in on them; ten officers and men had been killed, and sixty-three of their assailants. In Calcutta, the capital herself, the military had had to be called out to clear the streets. And from Egypt came tidings of futile bomb-throwing at the Sirdar and cortège by students of Alexandria University. However, the first reinforcements from Malta were now being landed.

But what most riveted the secretary's attention was a five-line Laffan's telegram from Washington, stating that on the capture of a stockade near Hapapad in Samar—which island had proved to be the Acheen of the Philippines—not only the insurgents' rifles and ammunition but also many of their force were undoubtedly Japanese, the rifles being of recent manufacture and bearing the unerased mark of the Japanese Government factories at Kobe and Hokodate.

Savill intently re-read this far-reaching statement, trying to wrest from it its ulterior meaning. He drew a deep breath, and carefully folded the newspaper.

"If America fires up at this," he muttered, "and comes in the arena back-to-back with us—by Heavens, the Anglo-Saxon race will dominate the universe."

This view, common to most Anglo-Saxons, certainly had that particular aspect—at the time. But fate has ruled it differently. The race for dominance is not to the 'swift' Great Power or to the 'strong' or to the cunning. It is to Her that *fulfils* Herself—that fulfils the motive of her being. This Great Power sways the Balance of Dominance.

§ 1

The brilliantly lit windows of Number 8, and the carpet and awning stretching from the Park drive, across the walk and up to the garden entrance; behind the ivy and creeper-covered brick wall of that pleasaunce, a string band softly playing the voluptuous music of 'La Jocunde'; and the sight of a solitary auto-brougham, drawn up beneath the foot of the awning—these details brought Savill to a sudden stand. Into his recollection crept a vague memory of having telephoned earlier in the week declining an invitation from his sister.

Vexation and chagrin took him as he stood reflecting how awkward it would now be to obtain a meeting with Miss Stellman. Ruefully he contemplated his attire.

"Well, I must just hurry back, and change into evening dress," he reluctantly admitted to himself, "and waste half the night trying to corner Isobel."

Catching himself using her Christian name he unwittingly made a little grimace of disapprobation. He explained the why and the wherefore, too, to his admonitive dæmon; 'Isobel' came so readily to one's lips!

Just then voices came on his ear, and he marked that the driver of the brougham switched on his headlight and promptly swung open the door of the luxurious vehicle.

"Yes, your Excellency, I quite understand," Savill heard Dreischer say, as, emerging from the garden, he escorted his visitor. "No, no, not the slightest apology! I ask you. With me, business is always before pleasure. I only regret this rather perfunctory

way of doing it. I shall be glad to have confirmation of the instructions in writing in the morning; direct them to the office, marked 'private.'"

Savill, who was standing in the shadow of the massive elm bordering the drive, strained his eyes at the well-groomed figure who, pausing on the brougham-step, was shaking hands with his brother-in-law. It struck him he was familiar with the carriage of it; but as he lent an ear to catch the somewhat guttural voice, Dreischer motioned to the driver, and the brougham rolled noiselessly away, westward.

His brother-in-law stood for a moment or two contemplating it.

"That's odd," he said to himself, "why do they pretend they are selling overplus military foods to Harlingen, Stavoren and Delfzyl, even if they are cutting things down this autumn—as they say! Hulloo, Lesley, where did ye spring from? Edith said you couldn't come along."

His latent capacity for 'sizing up' the psychological moment had inspired Lesley. As he warmly shook hands with his brother-in-law, with whom as with most folks he was a favourite, he cast a significant nod at the footman standing by the bronze grille of beaten work opening on the capacious stretch of garden, now a charming dim-lit fairy-land; at the radiant windows, and gay and joyous dancers thronging the floor of the ballroom, their whirling, mazy figures coming and going past the tall French windows opening on the lawn.

"Just a minute or two on business with you, Caleb. Something has come along you can bear a hand in. . . . No, no, quite private business of my own."

"What the deuce has come over you Government

men," grumbled his brother-in-law, leading the way up to the house; "you had better come up to my business-room then. First here comes one idiot who hales me out on business and makes me lose half my dinner; and now you spring upon me. . . . Oh, it's all right, Les! We'll just step in by the French window here."

Savill cast a searching look round the room as Dreischer closed the window and again pulled down the long white blind.

Under the opalescent illumination from the silver electric reading-lamp on the business desk was spread a small chart of the Atlantic commerce tracks, and upon it Stanford's *Maritime Commerce Routes*, lying open at section 'West Atlantic,' with half a dozen pin-flags stuck in it denoting the whereabouts of ships of the N.Y.P. &. S.F. Company in mid-Atlantic. On the draw-ledge of the desk stood two coffee cups and liqueur glasses, together with a still smoking Turkish cigarette in the bronze ash tray.

For the second, Lesley vainly tried to connect these details with his hazy recollection of their unexpected participant.

"Anyhow, Caleb, I am not on the same errand as my predecessor," he said with a forced laugh, nodding towards the business table.

"No? I am very glad to hear that," replied Dreischer dryly. "A consignee that wants to change his port of discharge is a beastly nuisance, especially if it doesn't pay to tell him to go to the devil. What d'ye want?"

"I want to see Miss Stellman alone for a minute or two. Can you manage it?"

His brother-in-law ceased placing his finger tips lightly against each other. His chin sank into the ridge of puffy skin beneath it. Surprise and curiosity fled over his florid face, and it lapsed into an irrepressible grin.

"A singular request, a singular request, Lesley. It can certainly be accomplished, though I am confident she is engaged deep with partners already. Would Edie not do? . . . You know . . . not just the thing, to call *la belle Américaine* out of the ballroom because a relative of the host, a fellow whom she doesn't know, well, say, very intimately, wants to speak with her. . . ."

"No good playing the 'heavy' father, Caleb," Savill rejoined impatiently. "It's not a life and death matter I want to see her about, but a matter perhaps even more material than either. If you won't do it, I'll ring for Edie; and you know the fuss she makes!"

A humorous and quizzical look settled on his brother-in-law's blunt features. Shrugging his shoulders he left the room.

§ 2

Savill looked impatiently at his surroundings. With the woodwork of the many well-filled bookcases painted an ivory white, the walls above the shelves covered with plain red paper, the red paper above the Georgian mantelpiece as background to a series of old engravings in black frames, depicting the ships and maritime scenes of olden times, the whole atmosphere of the room evoked a feeling of rich comfort and inevitable cheerfulness. But to-

night Lesley was oblivious to any external influences. Restlessly he paced the long broad strip of carpeting, and cast about for a way to introduce his extraordinary application to Miss Stellman.

The Premier's face came before his mind's eye, as he had last seen it—white, lined with harassment and bodily fatigue, against the further gloom of the Cabinet Room; and at the languorous strains of music, at the rhythmic throb of dancing in the air, the murmur, the laughter, the echoes of many gay voices resounding about him—at the entire atmosphere of luxurious jocundity and freedom from care—a shock of vehement revulsion took him.

Ah, the 'Labourites,' they were more in touch with the primal facts of life, more sensitive to the hazards of fortune, than any plutocrats warmed with the wine of riches and nurtured on hereditary gifts.

Stepping to the window, he drew the blind aside a little, and peered out towards St. Stephen's.

Through the night and the heat and London's dust, the sessional lantern stood forth like a white wafer pasted on the darkness above the beaming face of Big Ben. In the garden before him lay a land of enchantment. The whole scene was bathed in the light from cleverly concealed opalescent arc lamps. The dark clumps of shrubs and trees, the strange exotic plants in bloom and leaf bordering the winding walks leading to the little fairy-like pavilions; the band playing somewhere in the obscurity this side the fountains; their marble statuary gleaming with the many coloured lights of innumerable lanterns, and their jets sparkling like diamonds as they fell back into the shimmer-

ing waters—the peep of a white gown, of the glowing tip of a cigarette, as a couple, chattering gaily, exuberantly, passed along the syringa walk beneath the window—the entire picture brought a strong sense of contrast to Savill. His thoughts returned to Parliament's troubled sitting that night.

"Peace or War?" he murmured. "It matters but little to the wealthy classes. It is the lower classes and the masses that are hit hardest . . . 'The pile of pawntickets' in the empty cupboard . . ."

He started, and gave vent to an exclamation of surprise. Just then, away over the park, west of Queen Anne's Mansions, a bugle call soared into the night, clear and strong. It was the alarum at the Wellington barracks.

Again it rang out, and again.

In a burst of dread, Savill pulled up the blind a little, unhasped the half-window, and leant out.

Some one in the garden mistook him for their host and called out in an excited voice; but he paid no attention. On his ear had come a faint clatter of horses' hoofs; and almost before he could adjust his eyesight to the darkness, a motor landaulette whizzed past westward along the park drive, a troop of mounted police galloping behind it.

With a jerk, Lesley withdrew himself into the room on hearing the door softly close.

§ 3

If there was wonder on Miss Stellman's face, on his there was a momentary blaze of unconscious admiration. Yet he could have noticed but little, for

when asked afterwards by his sister Winifred, who as editor of the senator's London journal naturally took a lively interest in chronicling his daughter's social progress, Lesley could only say she was 'dressed in a string of pearls round her throat and a rose among her dark, wavy hair.' Ardent white shoulders, a rose-flushed face, and questioning, challenging eyes—that was all that came within his vision.

"Well, Mr. Savill! Here I am, right away as soon as Mr. Dreischer told me I was wanted. Captain Lennox and I were going into the garden to sit out this mazurka, but hearing that bugle sounding at the barracks, he snapped out something about his men, and rushed away without even saying good-night. What does it mean?"

Her troubled voice, the clasp of her hand, brought Lesley back to cruel realities.

"I don't know," he replied gravely, slowly releasing her cool, firm palm; "pray God, it is not the 'bugle' marking the beginning of the end of all our negociations. Something very serious must have happened, for the troops to be called out at this time of night. Miss Stellman . . . will you help me in a rather delicate matter?"

Her deep blue eyes took on a surprised and serious look; the flush died from her face. Interlacing her fingers she looked searchingly at him.

Eye resting on eye gave mutual confidence.

"Yes," she answered suddenly, "yes, I will . . . and I can too, oh, yes, I can, Mr. Savill. . . . It did not strike me before. . . . Something, perhaps you Government people should know. You know, I will help you all I can."

Ah, what was that very wide-awake little god, Dan

Cupid, now doing, not to have hearkened to the intonation in her rich voice?

But Lesley bent on matters of State was obstinately blind. In an embarrassed manner he took a short turn or two, always coming back to where she was standing.

"Well, plainly, Miss Stellman, could you put me into your father's confidence as to the chances of immediately having an alliance between us and the States. . . . A treaty, you know, that goes slick through both your Houses; is not hung up till we are in a fearful mess between Germany and Japan."

"Yes, I can—and at once, too, Mr. Savill. Father's letter to me, yesterday morning, 'll give you all the information you want. He says, though, there is a very strong pro-German element, especially in the senates of the 'German' states, Missouri, New Jersey, Wisconsin. I'll get the letter for you now."

Savill's eloquent face thanked her.

Mr. Marlborough, he felt, was definitely eased on that most material point. He tried to thank her in words, but stumbled in his utterance, so full was his heart.

Miss Stellman's next words pulled him up sharp.

"You mention Germany, Mr. Savill. Count von Lützern paid a hurried visit here to-night when we were at dinner."

"The German ambassador's private secretary! I thought, I thought, I knew the figure. I came up to the garden entrance just as he was leaving."

Miss Stellman pointed significantly to the commerce routes strewed over Mr. Dreischer's business table.

". . . After we left the table I stole out into the garden to get a fresh 'Gloire' for my hair, and coming back I heard a word or two—I couldn't help it, really, I

couldn't, the window was not quite fastened, and you know how loud von Lützern gabbles."

Savill nodded. How ironical, how lying, came the enchanting strains of Kresner's 'Das Sühnopfer,' rising and falling upon his ear as the mazurka eddied and swirled along.

"Von Lützern, Mr. Savill—now remember what I say—was instructing Mr. Dreischer to direct by wireless messages some vessels of the Company not to discharge their Government consignments at Bremerhaven and Hamburg, but at some ports in Holland—Harlingen, I think, was one, Delfzyl was certainly among them. Which surely means . . . "

But Savill had put up his hand to silence her.

Loud voices called out something in the hall. As if all its strings had suddenly snapped, the band broke off, and the dancing abruptly came to an end. . . . It was that the gaiety of London, ay, of England and the Empire, was now eclipsed for many long and terrible weeks. The lamp of gaiety was shattered.

Some one was shouting the awful tidings to those happy, secluded, in the garden haunts. Savill rushed to the window, and threw it open.

"'Wiped out'? Impossible! It's a lie," hurled a voice out of the obscurity across the lawn.

"It must be, it must be," panted Dreischer, who had hurried to his brother-in-law. "My God, isn't the news terrible? The Japs have wiped out our China Squadron. Listen, Les. Listen."

On the air rang a strange and vast note, penetrating the hum of the night traffic of the world's metropolis. Seldom have Britons ever heard that bestial note. It came from the throats of infuriated thousands.

It was war now. War to the bitter end.

§ 4

"Yes, it is true," replied Spenser, Mr. Marlborough's parliamentary secretary, to Savill, who, with the senator's letter safe in his breast pocket, had gained Number 10 through the garden abutting on the Horse Guards' Parade; for Whitehall, and Trafalgar Square, and Charing Cross, late though the hour was, were blocked, impenetrable, with the raging crowds.

"Our China Squadron is gone. It is said the Japs captured only one vessel, either the *Thetis* or the *Amethyst*. The news has come through Vladivostok. Keiki was just handing in his recall to the Foreign Office, when word came through. It knocked the decent old chap all in a heap—he really didn't know; and we sent him away with a posse of mounted police behind him. The troops are being called out to keep order. There's a ghastly hubbub going on along Whitehall!"

"It's the Russian débâcle all over again," cried Savill in the heat of his bitter feelings. "But this time, Spenser, Germany joins hands with the Japs. We will have to fight with our backs to the wall."

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE THIRD BOOK

CHAPTER I

EVEN AS RUSSIA ONCE KNEW

THE course of this relation of world-wide hostilities now assumes a swollen current, in the torrential passage of which individuals become more or less absorbed. For the militant events chronicled and the currents and counter-currents of cosmic politics sway and are not swayed by ministries and other governing powers. Indeed they are only subject to the operations of those cardinal laws of national existence always growing more involute and correlated throughout those complexities of civilization that are constantly being developed as progressive nations march onward to their goal.

Thus it was when Great Britain, on the memorable morning of June 11, devoured the scanty news of the annihilation of her China squadron, that she found herself placed in much the same situation as Russia on February 9, 1904. That which, together with the sudden attack on Port Arthur, her diplomatist had condoned and her strategists had sagely commended as 'smart,' had now recoiled upon herself. Yet she had but herself to blame for refusing even at the

last minute to apply the one key opening the wards and locks of the Japenese mind. Is it not set forth in the entire history of Old and New Japan?

Too often have the Japanese shown their lack of justice, and their resentment against fancied injury. In the words of a popular Japanese politician, Mr. Shimada, the Japanese race 'consider themselves seriously wronged whenever they see others trying to gain ground as a strong and wealthy nation.' Baron Kaneko has put forth the pregnant saying, 'We feel it our duty to do our utmost to extend these blessings (of Western civilization) to other Oriental nations. And if the truth be told, the Westerner has always been hated in Japan. She has only tolerated him for the purpose of preserving herself against him.

Yet, despite all, to the very last minute, the British Ministry, though massing the military forces of the Crown, had enforced a strictly pacific rôle upon them. The seven vessels of the China squadron had been taken not so much unawares, as heavily hampered in their readiness for instant action through the desire of the Commons' majority to keep peace at all possible costs without dishonour to the flag.

§ 1

The forenoon of June 11 stands in the annals of London shrouded in crimson.

Though the provinces accepted the brief news with characteristic British fortitude and but girt their loins for the revenge, London with her hybrid populace, mercurial in temperament and tainted with that

neurosis inevitably engendered by an immense aggregation of human beings, London with her babel-like confusion of tongues, the innumerable riff-raff and 'hooligans' still swarming in her east end, Lambeth and poverty-stricken purlieus, London broke into a fierce jar of convulsions when the news of disaster had awakened her to another day.

Before eight o'clock the military and police, patrolling the Japanese quarter off Tottenham Court Road, and also in Poplar and Deptford, found themselves in collision with the rioters; but it was at the residence of the Japanese Ambassador, 5, Park Gardens, that the first of the actual conflicts began.

For a long time the cordon of troops extended in a half-circle before the back and front of numbers 4, 5, and 6, Park Gardens, had stolidly and good-naturedly repelled the mob's sinister attentions upon the Embassy.

When, however, Count Keiki and suite were just starting for Victoria Station, en route for Paris, having left Japanese affairs in the hands of the Chinese Ambassador, three small bombs thrown at the group standing for a second or two on the steps of the Embassy wounded two officials and the under-secretary. The dastard assailants, it was subsequently proved, were two so-called 'Britons'—continental scum, who for the sum of £1 10s., plus the false testimonies of two witnesses had been enabled to become loyal and trustworthy citizens of the Realm.

Immediately the officer in command ordered the troops to fire with blank cartridge over the heads of the mob, and on this not having the desired effect, after three repeated warnings, he cleared the short street

at the point of the bayonet, thus enabling the ambassadorial party to leave in safety.

At the first prick of cold steel the crowd, composed for the most part of foreigners, precipitately gave way, and an indescribable scene of confusion and hubbub ensued in the mad flight for escape, the hooting, serried ranks behind being ploughed into and trampled on by their broken front. Ambulances were soon on the spot. But, as was stated in both Houses late that afternoon, only two of the casualties showed signs of bayonet wounds, and they were but superficial.

The scattered rabble poured eastward, past the foot of Waterloo Place, along Cockspur Street, and into Trafalgar Square, where parties of mounted police were keeping the dense throng there on the move, and a strong body of troops based on the 'island' facing the mouth of Whitehall was being held in reinforcement. Like wildfire spread incendiary rumours as to the unfortunate incident at the Embassy. The contagion of mob hysteria infected the many thousands blocking all vehicular traffic in the neighbourhood of the Government offices, and—as at any time of undue excitement in great cosmopolitan centres—bands of hooligans seemed to spring up out of the pavement.

When at 10.30 a.m. Lesley Savill crossed Downing Street to gain the Foreign Office by a side entrance, the unruly populace at the top of the street were making ugly rushes, compelling the police in many cases to give way. For a minute or two the situation presented a very grave aspect.

It was the Trades' Secretary, honest and unvarnished Mr. Stodge, who tore the vitals out of the trouble.

Hatless and unaccompanied he had come out on

the steps of his office, and surveyed the ominous hurly-burly with perplexed eyes. On some one hitting him on the left shoulder with a rotten orange, he merely shook off the pulp, and bade the police put up their truncheons.

"What's the matter, lads?" he calmly asked the foremost of the heaving, roaring, gesticulating press. "What are you losing your heads over? Are you Englishmen, or are ye just that Continental scum this Channel Tunnel is bringing across to England? It was no home-bred Briton threw that at me, and these bombs at the Ambassador. No Englishman, I tell you. We are too fond of fair play and straightforward fighting——"

"Yah! Wot abaout them Chinks—an' our China wessels too?" yelled some one. "Ye all ought'r 'ang. Them——" but an energetic neighbour had suddenly pulled the Cockney's cap over his eyes.

"Want a neck to hang?" pealed the ex-workman's resonant voice into that heated atmosphere. "Well, here's mine. Lynch me if ye like; but, for England's sake, remember the born Englishmen of ye are the sons and gran'sons of them as took the Boer thrashin's standin', an' then thrashed the Boers till they couldn't."

Perhaps it was Mr. Stodger's unconscious lapse into the vernacular; perhaps, too, the 'home-bred' and saner Britons in the throng had come to their senses. However it was, a call went up of "Three cheers for good old Stodge. 'E's 'ome-bred, Stodge, ain't 'e?"

But the Minister had not finished. With prescience got from ruling many an irate Trades-Unionist meeting and National Labour convention, he knew he must yet hit hard.

"Go home," he thundered, "go home, an' read y'r newspapers. Ay, an' treasure them up till ye've won y'r day of reckonin', an' then ye'll get the whole story of how our China squadron fought. We can't get it yet—ye know as much as I do, as my fellow-ministers do; there can be no more news yet; but we'll prise it out of the enemy, then, with a touch of British steel. Ay, we Englishmen will, I tell ye. We are the sons of our fathers."

Hurrahs for 'England' went up, hurrahs for the 'Empire.' Many, their excitement turned into fresh channels, began roaring 'Rule Britannia' amid great cheering and clapping of hands. The well-known lines as in a mad esctasy of feeling surged along the street; and the further throngs took up the strains. The crisis was past.

London with her immense cosmopolitan populace of seven millions, long cockered on peace and a too easily earned plenty, with her nerves unstrung through her gargantuan appetite for something new, for excitement and glamour, had need to establish herself in fortitude and that doggedness of aim which is the cardinal feature of the English character. It was away beyond her, away in the provincial centres, and in the grey old towns, their roots laid deep in the storied past, that the real heart of England was beating sound, beating with an iron resolution.

Ah, staunch brave heart of Hers! When has it ever faltered in defeat and the darkest hour?

§ 2

The Trades Secretary was correct. There were no further news of the annihilation of the British China squadron.

Many newspapers as the day went on published enlarged accounts of what might be safely conjectured to have taken place, and the imagination of naval journalists and service experts ran riot. Yet when the evening edition of the *Daily Journal* appeared it still set forth merely the Admiralty communication, based on the accounts wired by the British Consul at Vladivostok.

Into Gaidamak Harbour, at 7.5 a.m., on June 11 (time, east of Greenwich), the Voynich Company's steamship, *Dubaroff*, had slowly made her way, flying signals for urgent medical assistance and the instant presence of the British Consul. She had on board twenty survivors of the 1,800 odd personnel manning the British China squadron. Its seven vessels had been surprised that morning between 1 and 2 a.m., and annihilated by the Japanese Home fleet of fifteen first-class ships of the line and five cruisers.

On the news reaching Governor Pukoff, he immediately sent down surgeons of the garrison medical staff, and ambulances. He himself superintended the removal of the stricken men to the nearest hospital, the Makharoff, and also ordered every facility to be given for communicating direct with London.

Early though the hour was, Vladivostok, which had so recently been perusing the accounts of the gay conclusion to the exchange of international amenities at Petropaulski, turned out en masse, and stood along her streets, mute, with bared head and pondering,

sympathetic face, as the British wounded were tenderly borne onward to the Makharoff.

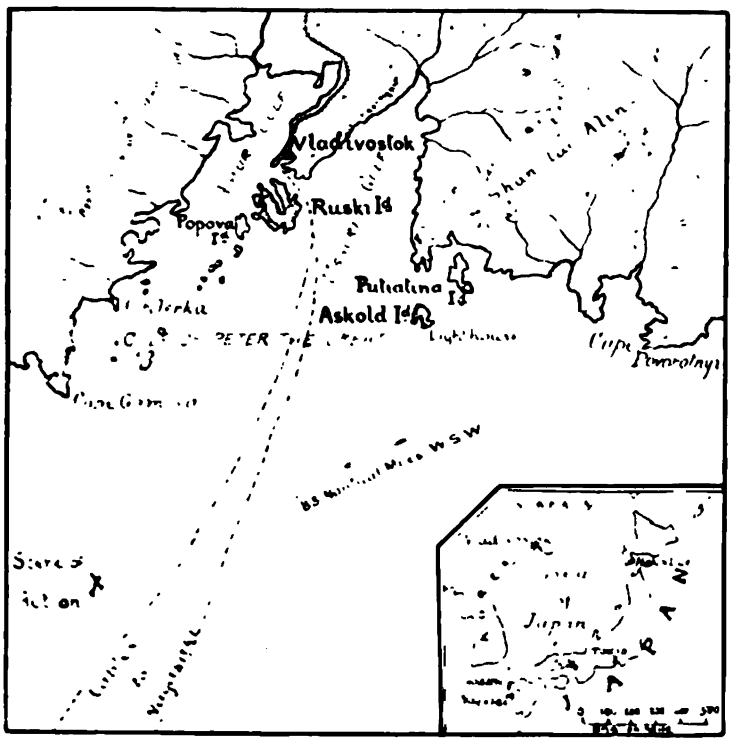
§ 3

Here then, are the few facts as reported by a lieutenant in the British flagship, Randall E. Easterwood, who was among those succoured by the greatly daring *Dubaroff*. The accounts subsequently furnished by some of the few prisoners at Tokio shed but little further light.

On the early morning of June 11, just after two bells of the middle watch, when the squadron was steaming in line ahead, WSW, sixty-three miles from Cape Povorotnyi and bound for Vladivostok for mails and final orders, the *Indefatigable*, leading vessel, signalled her flagship, "Steamers coming down ahead." The next minute she had confirmed her intelligence, adding that they were altering formation from double line abreast to line ahead.

At the first trill of the *Bellerophon's* signal-bridge telephone bell, Rear-Admiral Colbert had turned out all standing, and gained the bridge as the staff and executive officers off watch rushed on deck, several of them struggling energetically into their tunics. Just then, as the rapidly nearing vessels, now a few points to port, switched out all lights, the leading one fired a shot across the course of the British squadron; and the Japanese flagship, *Kamimura*, called up the *Bellerophon*.

Gone now in this decade of which we write was the flowery address of the inhabitants of Japan—a fact indicative in its way of their complete, if corrosive,



NAVAL ACTION OFF VLADIVOSTOK

assimilation of the material civilization of the West. Perhaps, in their feverish striving to out-West the West, their official adoption of Anglo-Saxon plain speech as well as alphabet may prove to be the most advantageous of the engrafted features!

Admiral Kamimoto's message was as laconic as it was insulting. Rear-Admiral Colbert was informed that war had been '*declared at Tokio*' *that night*, and Count Keiki was recalled. ". . . If the squadron you command is not surrendered to me in three minutes, I will open fire."

It was characteristic of Rear-Admiral Colbert that he issued his few brief orders before answering the message "Tell 'em I fight, and be damned to them," he said, handing back the signal slate as he took his last look along his line.

There was no time for any fresh formation. There was no time to throw overboard the woodwork and other fittings which the Admiralty had directed him to retain lest being entirely stript for action might precipitate hostilities on the part of the Japanese. There was hardly sufficient time for gun numbers to join their mates of the watch who had been lying down at quarters. This was the order: van—*Indefatigable*, *Thetis* and *Cambrian* (cruisers); centre—*Bellerophon* and *Powerful* (second-class ships of the line, i.e. battleships); rear—*Amethyst* and *Pioneer* (cruisers).

As the Japanese line bore away some points, evidently intending to come up in line ahead to starboard, and envelope the British formation, the electric transmitters on board the *Bellerophon* crackled and flashed; on the receiver dial of her consorts' steering-gear the index magnet swung round, and the eyes and hands of

quartermasters instantly responded. Like a solid line the British squadron swung up to attack. And even as it did so its centre burst into a fury of fire with their barbette and port casemate 12-inch guns. A few seconds later, the van and rear each having adjusted its grouped fire, opened out with their respective 9·2-inch and 7·5-inch armaments. The British bluejacket was in at the heart of the Real Thing at once.

The centre and rear of the Japanese instantly replied with an overwhelming weight of fire; but their leading vessels seem to have been taken aback somewhat by the rapidity and virulence of the British battleships' broadsides. Then a minute later, just as a broad sheet of smoky flame burst from the *Kamimura's* forward gas vent, that was rent from top to bottom, the mighty diapason of their 15·5-inch armament also swelled the deafening thunder of the unequal engagement.

§ 4.

Of what ensued Lieutenant Easterwood stated he had retained but a chaotic impression. The tremendous impact of 1,425-pounder projectiles crashing on the flagship's armour of 10½-inch E.C. steel, made her quiver like a live thing. As a shell burst against the breastwork of the after barbette, a blaze of yellow fire poured in through the sight slits of the after-conning tower, and blinded, choked by the poisonous fumes, its occupants desperately strove to recover themselves.

Again the flagship winced. In the momentary glare of a projectile bursting against her low after upper-

works, shreds of wreckage and the trunk of a human figure shooting through the murky air, fled across the retina of Easterwood's vision.

His senior officer—who was standing braced beside him, a twin microphone strapped against his ears for communications from the massive citadel forward where stood the Commander-in-Chief, the brain of the squadron—roared out some words, and, though neither Easterwood nor the signal yeoman heard, the lieutenant instantly understood him. The after fire-control station had been shot away and communications were jammed: gunlayers themselves had now to direct their fire.

Easterwood sprang down the ladder, to convey the order. As he stumbled along the mess deck he was in a terrible nightmare of stunning clamour and stifling, stinging smoke that was torn into a myriad ribands with gouts of steel slivers driving across the deck.

The *Bellerophon* reeled under two tremendous blows lodged somewhere just beneath him; she suddenly slanted steep to starboard, and threw him against a ventilating shaft. Then a great cloud of smoke rushed along the low deck, blotting out the misty radiance from the few unbroken electrics; a terrific shock made her again stagger. Easterwood was pitched forward on his face.

What he next recollected was groping his way up on deck, apparently having missed the conning tower ladder.

Thick biting smoke was now seething up behind him, and settling like a blanket on the devastated vessel. He heard the buzzers for the fire squads faintly sounding below, away forward, where every-

thing appeared a mere jagged and twisted wreck licked by great tongues of flame from the stump of the forward smoke stack. He also heard the fore barbette and casemate guns, port and starboard, firing with rapid precision. The enemy had completed his enveloping movements.

Some one lurched and fell against him, as, crouching low to escape the blizzard of destruction shrieking across the deck, he ran forward. Instinctively he threw an arm round the moaning sticky body.

"Wiped out, for'ard," he. heard. "My God, the Admiral."

A rush of desperate figures—stokers, fire nozzles in hand—swept toward Easterbrook. . . . The crashing of gun, the roar of bursting shell suddenly merged into a gigantic vomit of fire and thunder. The lieutenant's nightmare was at an end.

When he next opened his eyes, he was lying in the *Dubaroff's* stuffy saloon, and alongside him on the table lay the other sole survivor of his Britannic Majesty's ship, *Bellerophon*. In the deck house and forecastle were members of the crews of the *Indefatigable*, *Thetis* and *Cambrian* and *Pioneer*, whom the boats of the merchantman had picked up.

Of the still more terrible tragedy attending the loss of the four cruisers, the master of the *Dubaroff*, that had hung about on the outskirts of the engagement, gave the short explanation. They had been demolished by the heavy broadsides of the Japanese battleships that had beaten in their unprotected hulls like things of papier-maché, pounding the casemates and barbettes into scrap-iron, rending steel girders like cotton wool, and blowing

great fissures in their protection decks, to drive clouds of deadly nitrous gases and splinters into engine-room and stokehole. The leading cruiser, Captain Georgovich stated, seemed to have been falling literally to pieces, till, her boilers blowing up, she burst asunder in a gigantic geyser of smoke and flame.

Twelve minutes after the engagement had commenced the British line had been shattered, and the *Powerful*, firing heavily, had broken away WSW, with three battleships of the Japanese van in pursuit. The enemy's searchlights now piercing the twilight of the calm morning showed some of the few boats clustered about the battleship *Okuma* that was fast slanting her broken nose towards the bottom, and others gallantly penetrating the dense canopy of smoke and steam hovering over the *Pioneer* which was rapidly settling down.

§ 5

This was the scanty news, then, which, communicated by the Admiralty, convulsed the British empire to the very depths of her being.

Purblind politicians on both sides of the Houses of Parliament and many leading newspapers and weeklies accepted extreme views in their hysteria concerning the defeat; they denounced the Government for lack of foresight and initiative. Just as in the first months of the South African Campaign!

Suspense and restlessness instantly became very pronounced; and the flood of "special" and "bulletin" editions from the ceaseless Press went far to aggravate the tension of the situation without accomplishing much good. The Japanese, they averred,

had despatched a strong squadron to meet the British in the Indian Ocean—Socotra was to be their base. The Japanese, they announced, were on the lookout in the Mediterranean for the first of the unconvoyed transports; and the inexplicable and sudden disappearance of six destroyers built at Genoa for the Spanish Government certainly lent an air of truth to this canard. Ten days later, however, six new torpedo craft were operating from Bizerta, France's second Mediterranean naval base!

But the British populace had too many sharp realities wherewith to edge their apprehensions, to take serious alarm at unverified rumours.

The enemy was about to invade Australia.

From Wampao—that deep-water port which, sixty miles nearer Canton, with her pushing merchants in direct and swift railway communication with the great interior markets of China, had killed Hong Kong and Kowloon as a commercial centre and entrepôt—had come the announcement of the sailing of the Japanese transports from Formosa for the Australian coast. Though as yet refused official authentication, this startling news had been indirectly confirmed by the sudden entraining of Canadian troops for Esquimault and the Pacific, and the acceptance of a contingent of 8,000 militia from the South African Commonwealth, together with the Royal Arsenal Transport Department's call for vessels for the expedited embarkation of 20,000 home and auxiliary troops.

In Egypt, where British troops were patrolling the streets of Alexandria and Cairo, and guards had been posted to protect the Canal, the insurrectionary unrest had become so active that orders had been wired to land two battalions, one cavalry regiment and three

batteries of the Indian reinforcements at Alexandria, while Aldershot received instructions to get ready one brigade, one cavalry regiment, and four batteries for immediate embarkation to strengthen further the British forces there.

With the Japanese holding command of the Pacific till the British squadron arrived in force to dispute it, the Suez route to Australia had to be held at all costs for the quick passage of military forces to India and Australia. Singapore and Hong-Kong, it was recognized, had meantime to defend themselves upon their own resources.

§ 6

It was now that the electorate of Great Britain and Ireland began to reap the fruits of so-called economy in both Services.

It was first borne in upon them in the head-line, common to almost every journal in the Isles—BREAKDOWN OF REINFORCING BATTLE-SHIPS. THREE MUST RETURN. Serious defects had developed in the *Ajax*, *Redoubtable*, and *Lord Nelson*, as a result of repairs not having been previously effected though scheduled, and their detention at Gibraltar had become imperative.

Dockyard exigencies, the Government explained, had previously precluded any prompt effecting of the repairs, which, as the majority in the Commons—without any demur from the electorate—had in 1917 strongly negatived private dockyard naval repairs, had been postponed till more important arrears had been cleared off as regards ships in the Home Fleet reserve. Moreover, the defects had not

been originally considered to be 'Pressing—for immediate attention.' However, some one would be sacrificed on the high altar of efficiency!

In truth, the national dockyards and arsenals, now that trades unionism and national labour were in power, had lapsed toward something of the same state as had once been prevalent in France, especially in 1905–6. They had become the 'perquisites' of British trades unionism—labour in its most exclusive and ironical aspect.

Great had been the rejoicings in the last Liberal Administration, and also in Mr. Marlborough's, at the reduction of the Navy's fuel bill, without, it was then confidently stated, impairing naval efficiency. Again, as in the last decade of the previous century, the personnel now spent at sea, in manœuvres and actual training for war, a period varying from only sixty to eighty days.

Jack's lot when contrasted with the months at sea under the famous Fisher régime was now a more happy time. No longer was he overtrained; no longer did he become 'stale,' and long for rest instead of manœuvres. The Admiralty themselves, influenced without a doubt by that idiosyncrasy of the inhabitants of the Isles which leads them to heights of enthusiasm and depths of apathy, had not yet hit on the happy mean of the duration for war practice. The 'Anti-fag' advocates had gone too far, just as had the cheeseparing economists. Dangerous deficiencies were to reveal themselves.

Yet what came home to the British mind, perhaps even more than the deterioration of the naval standard for instant efficiency in war, was the decrease in the home tonnage, so startlingly demonstrated on

repeated calls for transports. With the opening of the Channel tunnel, 1915, Britain's importance as the ocean-transit nation of the globe was rapidly diminishing; she was ceasing to be the chief entrepôt of the West. It was not only indirect financial inducements—lessening of light dues, etc.—that had led British shipowners to man their forecastles with British seamen!

Many of the first-class liners were being kept for the diminished mail services, but more, those over twenty-two knots, were being taken for use as naval auxiliaries, scouts and stores craft. It was principally with second-class liners, large cargo steamers, and the Eastern Canadian and the Canadian-Pacific Companies' Atlantic fleets, together with a number of U.S.A. and Continental vessels purchased by enterprising shipping firms, that the transport of Britain's troops was being effected.

CHAPTER II

THE SINISTER EAST AND ALLY

ON June 13, it was, late at night, that the lurid lightning of war zigzagged across North-West Europe, and Britain found herself sore beset both east and west.

The National-Labour Ministry, now in the throes of dissension among the members of its cabinet and also in the party ranks, had granted the evening of that date for debate on its foreign policy. Speaker after speaker had arraigned the Ministry. There had been outbursts of impassioned, ofttimes volcanic vehemence directed against the Government by its supporters, interspersed by vitriolic and searching replies from the Opposition. Already by 10.25 p.m. its leader, Sir F. Smythe, had delivered himself of his caustic and plain-speaking support of the Government's prompt action against Japan. But as yet only Mr. Stodge, Minister of Trades, the Colonial Under-Secretary, and minor members of the Front Bench, had replied in jejune and tame speeches.

At 7.25 p.m., Mr. Marlborough had been suddenly called from the Chamber, to be followed shortly by the members of the Cabinet manifestly in surprise. And thus it was that not in the House, but in its sacred precincts without, in the lobbies and private rooms,

was the anomalous situation being discussed with feverish vitality and eagerness.

What had caused the Prime Minister and principal colleagues to withdraw when the existence of the Ministry practically hung in the balance?

In the crowded Strangers' Gallery, Major Savill touched the shoulder of Captain James, and nodded to the exit grille.

"Les is wrong for once," said the Major in an undertone as he rose up to go; "there's to be no great scene to-night, Jim! Let's cut it and go somewhere for supper, then turn into the United Service. Mr. Marlborough seems to have spiked his guns, eh?"

Captain Savill shook his head as the two brothers stepped up the gangway to the exit.

"I think not, I think not," he replied slowly, letting his eyes travel back to the half-deserted floor of the Commons. "He may be a bit of a persuasive charlatan in politics, but he's a born fighter. Something must have come along to take the wind out of him."

"He was really the cause of the Admiralty's lethargy in the cause of your submarines," shot out the Major in a fierce whisper, glaring at the doorkeeper who was motioning him to keep silent. "They could easily have obtained the findings of that Commission of theirs much earlier, and then you wouldn't have had to shatter your career for nothing."

§ 1

As the brothers stepped out into the corridor a ripple of excitement passed over the Commons, and the Savills went back precipitately. Members came

trooping in from all the different chambers without, and almost instantly, so brief it seemed, there was not a seat vacant in the House itself.

Mr. Tim Callaghan, M.P. for the county of Dublin, half paused in his turbid outburst of scorn and distrust directed against the Administration, speculating if the brilliancy of his vituperation had effected the transformation. But it had been owing to the return of the Premier and several colleagues. With much astonishment it was marked that Mr. Marlborough stepped gravely across the floor to the Opposition Front Bench, and bending down to Sir F. Smythe, entered into a whispered conversation with him that lasted some minutes.

A gesture of alarm, of consternation, suddenly broke from the Opposition leader. His face and bearing, on the Premier returning to his seat, betrayed traces of agitation and dismay as he hurriedly conferred with party leaders sitting beside him, but the First Commoner's was white, inflexible, rigid in impassivity. It was soon to give way.

When he rose to speak, immediately Mr. Callaghan had concluded his scarifying, the House forthwith realized it was a moment of more than party crisis. It was indeed one of the most critical moments in the history of the British Empire. The Premier's easy, mellifluous utterance was gone. He spoke in short, sharp sentences that in their brevity and crispness sufficiently denoted his perturbation.

> MR. MARLBOROUGH.—I regret this debate must now deal with much more momentous issues than were anticipated even a few days ago. Events are moving swiftly towards a world-wide

cataclysm—events which, I confess, have caused myself and those acting with me to become guilty of colossal errors of judgment. I affirm that England has loyally kept in the paths of peaceful progress and brotherhood among the nations. But has there been the same loyalty, the same sincerity, shown by the other great empires that claim to form part of what is called the civilized world? I say "no." I say such an illusion now plays no part with us. For two nations with whom England has ever tried to maintain most amicable relations—two nations, the Governments of which have repeatedly strained the cord of friendship—have now embarked on a course of undisguised aggression.

I have to state that Germany has set her forces in motion to seize the territory of our ally, the Netherlands. Her pretext? Hers is the empty pretext of intervention on behalf of a minor party in the home politics of the Netherlands. . . . A chimerical pretext—a mendacious pretext! It is because, with the Dutch ports and colonies in her possession, she will instantly take the great step of challenging the Mistress of the Seas, that Germany has broken the peace of Europe. . . . But the nation that once defied the might of Spain is again, even singlehanded, defending her liberties. She will not stand alone, I say. Is this country to hesitate in responding to the urgent appeal received this afternoon from the Government of the Queen of the Netherlands for armed support? England, the Free—the Just? The very freedom this House enjoys in directing the destinies of herself and Empire owes much

of its historic source to the intervention of the Stadtholder of Holland, William, Prince of Orange.

I care not whether this Administration or its successors directs the details of our intervention; it is provided for—it is well to remind the Country—by the Convention of July 11, 1917, a Convention called in maintenance of the neutrality and integrity of the Netherlands.

Whether the Cabinet survives, I care not. We have already as His Majesty's ministers taken the decisive steps. The honour of our race, the future of the Empire, is at stake. It would have been a criminal folly to hesitate for one hour. This evening we have informed the Government of the Netherlands, that the forces of the Crown are to move in their support. France also, bound by the same Convention, has given the order for the mobilization of her arms.

The Prime Minister paused, and his heavy eye swept the crowded benches as if to beat down refusal. He gathered himself together, his right hand, resting on the despatch box in front of him, twitched a little; and a spasm of fear took Lesley Savill, who was in attendance, together with Mr. Marlborough's parliamentary secretary. But the next second, the familiar voice rang on his ear more vehement than before. It rang out passionately, nay, defiantly, through the stillness of the startled Commons.

Only two days ago the two Signatories to the Convention intimated to the German Government that its terms had not lapsed. Germany's answer is—the invasion of Holland. At this

very hour the German troops are marching on Pannerden and the Dutch Defence. If we had felt hesitation in standing fast by our engagement of 1917—if we had scrupled, in face of the aggression in the Far East, to send our home fleets to sweep the German Eagle off the sea—that hesitation, that scruple, would have vanished at once. We hold absolute proofs—we have facts—that in this quarrel Germany is the ally of Japan. These proofs, I say, we will publish to the world.

Not for a single instant do I quarrel with the action of the Opposition leaders in seeking to indict this Administration. I take no refuge in the stereotyped appeal to suspend criticism—to waive debate till we have to some safe degree grappled with the Empire's enemies. I only put before you the stern facts of the present. In the hands of the Commons—in your hands—now lie whatever steps may be necessary for the prosecution of hostilities in Europe as well as in Asia and the Pacific.

Some of the more hysterical members may have felt inclined to ebullience; but Mr. Marlborough's astounding statement concerning the German advance on Holland and alliance with Japan left them all aghast. A great silence fell on the House, interrupted only by the slight far-off movements of many leaving the Strangers' Gallery to wire away the news. Never before had the great glass ceiling, that hides the consummately beautiful roof overhead, with its delicate stone fascia and noble arches, looked down on such a thunderstricken crowd of faces.

Sir F. Smythe and Mr. James Holyoke, leader of the Social Democrat group, sitting on the benches below the gangway on the Government side, rose simultaneously to their feet. They confronted each other for a few seconds, each declining to give way. Then intuition, perhaps aplomb as well, induced the usually stubborn leader of the classes to resume his seat.

It was the Social Democrat's voice, harsh and strident, his abrupt and unmincing demeanour, that almost in a trice changed the feelings of the members.

"I ask the members of all parties to remember there is a more effective way of beating down aggression than with jabbing sword and bursting bombshell. The Social Democrats in Great Britain do not blame the Prime Minister for believing too soon that the days of true humanity are come. It is not so. Only among our world-wide brotherhood does true humanity, the real essence of the Sermon on the Mount, exist, and that deplorably imperfect.

"Our aspiration is no idle dream. . . . My honourable friends on the left dissent. I deny it . . .

"Our aspiration is no idle dream; it is rapidly becoming an entity. The party I represent is the chief factor in international politics. It is we that influence peace or war. Emphatically I denounce this bloody strife—this fatuous call to arms."

The temper of the House had instantly become altered. The Social Democrat leader served as a kind of stalking-horse for the passions of members. There broke out cheers and counter-cheers, loud, fierce, defiant. Cries of "'Vide! 'Vide!" rang from the Opposition ranks and many members of the Government party.

And again for the second time the Opposition, with three exceptions, filed into the Government lobby, giving Mr. Marlborough a majority of 243.

§ 2

As the Savills along with the other excited occupants of the Strangers' Gallery were streaming out, the House having immediately adjourned after its momentous sitting, they encountered Lesley struggling against the crush. Reaching out an arm Captain Savill clutched him by the shoulder.

"Oh, it's you," panted his brother, drawing them both into the comparative privacy of an adjacent cross-passage, "I was trying to catch you before you got out. If you take my advice, Jim, go straight back to-night to Harwich, and volunteer for active service in your submarines. The crews in reserve are volunteering very slowly now for the G and F divisions. Every man Jack of you'll be needed by this time to-morrow night. I am only telling you what the Third Sea Lord's secretary hinted to me you should do. To tell the truth, you've saved a couple of resignations on the Board. You won't be forgotten by Sir Henry, at any rate."

But Captain Savill had ignored the personal issues of the crisis. He jerked out:

"The last of the Reserve are being called up, then?"

"Yes, we're going into it at once with Germany," replied Lesley, wiping his heated face with his handkerchief. "I expect 'mobilization' for the last lot of defence is already being wired. We have known, for a couple of days now, this was coming. . . . Yes, Arthur,

I've got to skedaddle back to work. You are right, though; it is hammer-and-tongs with us now against the Japanese-German Alliance. Curse 'em! Perhaps, though, the United States is coming in with us."

It was no 'perhaps'! It already was much of a certainty.

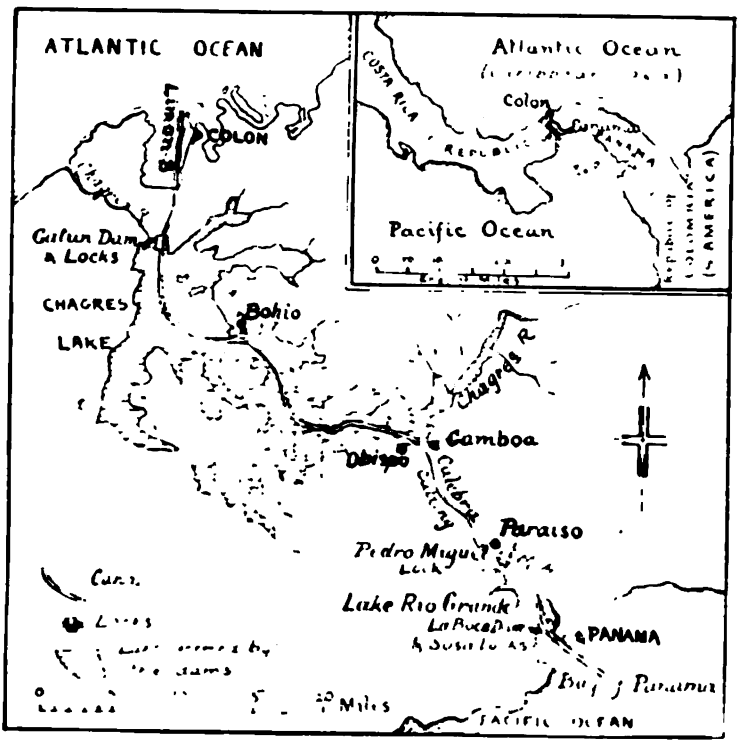
TERRIBLE DISASTER IN THE PANAMA CANAL. BRITISH WARSHIPS HELD UP AT COLON.

These were the newsboys' wild cries echoing far and wide to greet the two Savills when they had hurried out of St. Stephen's into Westminster Bridge Road—Captain Savill on his way to the adjacent mono-rail station. In the brilliant light from the many electrics ranged along both side tracks the broad street appeared to be but one dense uneven mass of struggling excited people and blocked traffic. Simultaneously with the startling news just put before the Commons, came the totally unexpected tidings of hostile adventure against the Panama Canal.

"By Jove, Arthur, this'll be the work of the Japs," cried Captain Savill, vigorously shouldering a way through the deep crowd round the nearest press kiosk. "It will mean salvation to us, though."

With difficulty he worked forward, and tossing a shilling into the nearest window, grabbed a newspaper from an outstretched hand, and fought his way back to his brother.

"The *Suffrage*, by Jove," exclaimed Major Savill, as James hastily folded back the journal, still damp



THE PANAMA CANAL

and smelling of printer's ink. "There it is, Jim. Middle of the foreign news page—two columns, too!"

"Yes! The Japs have done it," cried Captain Savill triumphantly, his words, and the sight of the newspaper, attracting a group of eager listeners. "They have burst in the Pedro Miguel lock. The canal 'll be blocked for months now. Our Atlantic Squadron will need to go either round the Horn or the Cape of Good Hope. . . . No, Arthur, sorry can't come up to the Club. I'll just manage now to catch the midnight mail connexion with Harwich."

§ 3

Of the terrible event precipitating war between the Great Republic and the Empire of Japan numerous detailed and explanatory accounts appeared as the weeks went on; but that first published by the *Suffrage* was perhaps never surpassed in interest and accuracy. From it is taken the following condensation:—

Early on the morning of June 13 a Japanese merchant steamer, *Kiaso Maru*, clearing from Nagasaki with general cargo for New York and Philadelphia, arrived at Panama, where, as the British squadron was now hourly expected at Colon, due precautions were taken regarding her. A canal pilot was put in charge of her, together with a strong Customs guard, one of the latter being posted in her engine-room to prevent any scheme being carried out for sinking her in the waterway.

The *Kiaso Maru* passed safely through the Sosa lock, and crossed the Rio Grande lake. She then had to traverse the Pedro Miguel lock, through which she was to reach the Culebra Cutting, that narrow

waterway issuing upon the wide artificial basin of the Chagres lake formed by the gigantic dam at Gatun.

At Pedro Miguel, where are two locks parallel with each other, the *Kiaso Maru* entered the "eastward bound" one, and slowly rose on the sluices being opened, while an American liner, *State of California*, was being lowered through the other. The passengers on board the liner crowded her upper and hurricane decks to watch the operation. On the *Kiaso Maru*'s dingy bridge, Obeysami, the Japanese master, stood smoking a cigar and talking with a U.S.A. Customs officer who had boarded her; and beneath the short awnings of the after-deck sat Obeysami's wife watching their two children playing with a doll.

Of a sudden there came a huge gush of crimson fire, rushing upward and outwards; a deafening roar smote the air; the peaceful lock had become a volcano of death and devastation. Flying fragments of wreckage and dense clouds of smoke hurtled through the sunny air.

The *Kiaso Maru* was vomited forth into splinters of steel and débris. The *State of California* collapsed like a bandbox. The solid wall between the locks was demolished, and the upper and lower gates of the right-hand lock, where the steamer blew up, were pulverized by the terrific shock.

The gates of the other lock collapsed, and from the Culebra Cutting the water came pouring like a great river. Not a soul survived of the Japanese crew, and of the U.S.A. liner only seven out of 264 were found alive, blinded, deafened and maimed.

The *Kiaso Maru* had been a veritable floating mine. Hidden in the depths of her cargo, more probably in her double bottom, there had been tons of chimose

powder, fired by some desperate patriot, waiting there to close a contact and fire the explosive. At the cost of 310 lives the Panama-Colon Canal had been closed for months to come.

A scrap of curious information must be added This was made public many weeks after the disaster, by one of the seven American survivors. Just before the explosion this seaman, forecastle hand on board the *State of California*, had marked the master of the *Kiaso Maru* waving his cap to the liner's Bridge, then ceasing in his talk with the U.S.A. officer, he had pulled his syren lanyard and given three long, distinctive hoots on his syren. No salute had it all been! It had been the signal for destruction.

§ 4

At this very minute, then, Captain Savill reflected, as at 110 miles an hour the long lithe corridor train was hurled along beneath the parent rail by its powerful electric tractors, that—in the great centres of trade and population throughout the States—indeed, everywhere the telegraph could reach the ear of the public—clamour for war against Japan would be swiftly developing into a paroxysm of wrath—a wrath compared to which that fired by the *Maine* disaster would be mere vapouring hysteria.

Only the previous afternoon, as the *Suffrage* pointed out in laconic comment, had Baron Sasayami, Japanese Ambassador, politely, suavely, taken great pains to make clear to Foreign Secretary Tait that the military stores and equipments discovered amongst the Philippine insurgents were of obsolete patterns now being sold out of the Japanese Service; doubt-

less, they were being 'run' into the islands by unscrupulous speculators, possibly of British, nay, American nationality. To maintain amicable relations with the Great Republic was Japan's most ardent hope.

In the past few days, however, many of the American Press had been republishing records establishing the fact that Aguinaldo had received money and supplies from Japanese supporters, after as well as before the downfall of Spain. In the *Suffrage*, as Captain Savill saw, stood a column and a half of significant extracts.

The Asiatic Power, blinded by her colossal self-confidence, which her fifty years' orgy in Western materialism had but flattered, was deliberately precipitating hostilities with the American Republic. Had she hoodwinked her European ally?—that, Berlin was soon to solve.

§ 5

But the newspaper set forth other news, ominous and only too indicative of Britain's imperilled status as an Empire Power.

From a correspondent at Peshawur was a brief cablegram stating that in the borders of the North-West Frontier mollahs were preaching a holy war and calling the tribes to arm. This he had just had confirmed by direct proofs, though the Administration and military authorities still denied its authenticity. Native rumours were everywhere current that the Amir of Afghanistan was assembling his troops, and about to seize the passes and issue forth to help in sweeping the Feringhees to the sea; and certain it was that the Amir had suddenly assumed a recalcitrant

attitude which was causing much anxiety at Simla and Calcutta. At Dacca, the white military reinforcements had been requisitioned to keep order, in the surrounding district as well as the city.

Yet it was the headlines above the cablegram from Cairo, from the journal's own correspondent there, that caused Captain Savill to desist from searching for the latest news from Holland and Germany.

"By Jove, though!" he grunted to himself, putting out a hand the better to adjust the shaded electric light moving on a ball-joint and chain just above the comfortable coupé, "we are going to have plenty on our hands in Pharaoh-Land, as elsewhere. 'Egypt for the Egyptians'—Bengal for the baboos—and Australia for the yellow devils."

With a wry grimace of his lean features, he ran his eye over the news from Cairo; and so intent was he that he remained ignorant of the surprise, conjecture, gladness that swept over the faces of two sailor-like individuals who caught sight of him as with easy gait they passed along the narrow corridor between the coupés and further side of the softly swaying train.

EGYPT IN REVOLT.

CAN WE HOLD CAIRO WITHOUT REINFORCEMENTS?

ALARMING NEWS.

CAIRO, *Monday* 13.

Cairo is seething in revolt.

Rumours are everywhere gaining credence amongst the natives that Bengal is in insurrection, and India is throwing off the 'English yoke.' In the native cafés here it is openly said that the Japanese fleet,

consequent on sweeping the British China Squadron off the sea, is now escorting transports to support the Indian and Egyptian risings, while the Commander of the Faithful is preparing to send another army from Stamboul. Everywhere is wild excitement, and business is practically at a standstill.

Yesterday evening, *Rasul-el-Hakk*, a native print, its Englished title *Messenger of Truth*, published a proclamation purporting to emanate from the head-quarters of the League of Liberty: it declares the Khedive is a traitor, and calls on the people of Egypt to attack the English; it assures them the native troops are ready to fight against the infidel. The police promptly seized the paper wherever it was to be found.

This morning, on it being reported that the printing office was in the tangle of lanes south of the Muski quarter, the bridges on the Khalig Canal were occupied by native troops, detachments of the Lancashire Fusiliers patrolled the Muski quarter and the Boulevard Mohammed Ali, with their reserve in the square of Atabet el Hadra, so as to isolate the entire locality concerned. The police then penetrated into it, to an old house with an arched doorway and most elaborately carved screens to its windows. On the householder protesting nothing could be found on his premises, the search was instantly begun. Entrance to the women's quarters was fiercely resented, the British officer in charge of the police was severely wounded, and one of the obstructionists killed. The door was forced, and in the harem were found two hand-presses together with a great number of broadsheets and newspapers. The staff, however, had escaped by a window, and across some lower roofs.

Scarcely an hour later, a most exaggerated and fantastic account was being circulated everywhere. It was declaimed by men standing on tables in the crowded cafés, and by mollahs from their pulpits in the mosques. The English had raided the Muski quarter, killed and made prisoners of peaceful traders, and had broken into the most private chambers of the houses to insult the women and plunder the contents. 'Down with the infidel's tyranny. Egypt for the Egyptians.'

The police have been kept busy all this afternoon, breaking up seditious groups in the streets, and clearing the cafés. There have been fierce scuffles, and many arrests, not without bloodshed, though the native police, mostly Nubians, have acted with most admirable self-control. The gatherings in the mosques are a much more serious matter, for it would precipitate religious animosities to invade them. It has been decided that the Mohammedan troops will support the police in dispersing the crowds issuing from the mosques, the Sirdar answering for the fidelity of his men. The Sheikh of El Azhar, who has been communicated with, has promised to use his authority and that of his colleagues to stop the mollahs' agitation.

As I close, a report comes in from Alexandria, also from Tantah, announcing similar seditious reports in circulation and grave developments at both centres. Answers, by telephone, have failed. The wires have been cut. Luckily we still have the wireless telegraphy to rely on.

We are face-to-face with an organized and most virulent rising.—ROBERT DOUGLAS.

[Our Service correspondent furnishes the following

notes on the British forces in Egypt. At the Kasr-en-Nil Barracks are the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers and the 2nd Lincolns. The 7th King's Dragoon Guards and the 34th Field Battery, R.F.A. are at the Abbasiyeh Barracks on the edge of the desert, where also are stationed the 6th Egyptian Regulars that are entirely officered by natives, and two squadrons of Egyptian cavalry. At the Abdin Barracks are the 4th Egyptians. In the citadel are a company of Royal Engineers, a company of Royal Garrison Artillery, a few native gunners, and two companies of the Lincolns. There is an Egyptian depôt battalion at Tourah, also another plus a cavalry squadron at Alexandria; but the rest of the native army is stationed at various distant points on the Nile. A battery, the 50th R.F.A., is in seaside camp near Ramleh, while at different points in the Nile Delta and on the Canal are detachments of the 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade. At Alexandria the 2nd King's Royal Rifles have been reinforced by the 1st Battalion from Gibraltar, also drafts from the 2nd battalion Connaught Rangers at Malta.

So many points may have to be guarded in the quarters where are the foreign residents and their property, also the Government establishments, that the military forces in Cairo are by no means large enough, considering the extent and peculiar character of the Egyptian capital. It is rumoured, that the first of the transports, *Jelunga*, *Isis*, *Clan Chattan*, *Clan Robertson and Calcutta*, with reinforcements, for India, have been directed per wireless message to put into Gibraltar till further instructions are transmitted. Is the National-Labour Government about to submit to the Bengali's mutinous demands? If

so it is marching to the rapine and the dismemberment of the British Empire.]

"It is not that," growled Captain Savill, sitting up with a jerk. "The transports can't pass into the Mediterranean till Germany is swept off the sea there. We're in a tight hole this time."

Just then the shrill screaming of the twin-tractor's whistle told him Bradfield had been passed, and in a minute or two the express would be running into Harwich. Hastily rising, he began collecting his evening papers and made ready to alight.

§ 6

Parkeston Quay station, which was the nearest to the new naval barracks erected to accommodate the men of the Harwich submarine division, was crowded with townsfolk anxious to get the last news from town. As Savill thrust and banged against the stiff door a couple of figures came running along the platform. One of them promptly saluted, and gave an energetic tug, opening the coupé.

"Why, Ellis, where have you sprung from?" asked Savill, in a hearty voice, on recognizing the electrician (SB) of his old flagship, G 5; "you'll quickly be into the real thing now. And Garritch, too," as the hand of the warrant officer (SB) went up in salute. "Glad to see your faces again, men. Had an hour or two on shore?"

"Yes, sir. G 5, 7, and 9—the 'crocks,' sir, as you used to call 'em—went into dry dock last night; same thing as ever, sir, for tank self-adjustments. An' we've been given two hours' leave, with strict

orders not to 'exceed bounds,' case we get the call to prepare for sea. . . . Beg your pardon, sir, but are you really coming back to us . . . ?"

Eagerly the two men looked at him.

The vibrant note of concern and regard in the warrant officer's voice, the sight of many of the other submarine units on leave who gathered around attracted by the sight of Captain Savill, their glad air and little side attempts to catch his eye and salute, the sharp salty breath of the sea in the still night, and the lights and bustle in the dockyard—all came home sharply to him.

The well-known faces of the seamen revealed themselves to him in a fresh and sympathetic light.

"I can't say," he replied abruptly, "but I'll tell ye all this much, lads—I am volunteering for active service with you."

"We're very glad to hear that, sir," said Garritch simply, "ay, every man of us in the division. They are cranky craft, sir, and it's only them as man them know it. Just yester morning, when Commander Moresby was taking out the flagship, sir. . . ."

But the warrant officer's sentence was never concluded. From the barracks near by rose the peremptory shrilling of a bugle, again and again; a rocket streamed up from the dockyard signal station, and even before it had burst into a crown of purple stars the deep report of a signal gun boomed inland from the Landguard batteries.

It was the alarm. Across European lands and seas the clamour of war was breaking.

Within twenty-five minutes from receipt of Admiralty orders, the submarines G 1—2—3 had cast off moorings in the outer basin, and having gained the stream

under their own power were now slipping seaward in line ahead with conning-tower and dome just above the calm waters; and in the gleaming wake followed their parent vessel, the cruiser *Harwich*, to take up her station in Cork Hole soundings as the temporary receiver base of their underwater signalling when they went eastward. On shore, battery search-lights and signal stations had been manned, and already the 'examination' vessel, second-class battleship *Blenheim*, was slowly moving down to the mouth of the estuaries, to stand by the *Harwich*, and also to exhibit till daybreak on June 14 the three vertical red lights warning merchant-men that Harwich port was closed, and all must bring-to for examination or be fired upon.

Well it would have been for England had her great naval bases responded as instantly and efficiently as Harwich when the call for coast defence came, that early summer morning. . . . Already the first and second German battle-squadrons had issued from the Jahde and Ems. . . .

§ 7

"Honour to whom honour is due, Savill," said Commodore Osborne, naval officer in charge of Harwich sub-base, as he rang off No. 2 signal station and put up the microphone. "The G craft have got away first; and that's all due to your handling. I say, it is; it's absurdly idiotic to deny it, man! You are doing the right thing in volunteering for your old command, and I'll send up your request as soon as Whitehall stops wiring. I don't like saying it, but

the men 'll be all the better for you being put back into G craft. Beastly divers, the lot of them!"

Captain Savill turned abruptly to the window just at his back, and raising the corner of the blind, peered out across the stream, over to where the Landguard batteries now loomed indistinct in the first grey shoots of morning.

"I don't know whether I did the right thing after all," he said in a low, uncertain voice. "But it used to madden me, thinking of the risks G class take every day. I don't care a rap for myself, or prospects either, for that matter. It is the men. Osborne, you know?"

A telephone bell jarred noisily on the commander's desk. The whistle of a voice-tube blew out with a sharp squeak, and some one piped, "Harbour-master wants to speak with you, sir. He says the Germans have captured Delfzyl; their gunboats are coming down the Rhine. The Hook of Holland has just phoned the news." But with a softening of his rather truculent face Commodore Osborne had suddenly shoved back his chair, and stepped over to the submarine officer.

"Ay, it was for the men, Savill," said he quietly, laying a hand on his shoulder; "we who know you know that. You're no coward. It is the best we're all facing now—dying for the sake of England. Ah, England."

From seaward floated the sullen boom of a gun as the *Blenheim* arrested some vessel.

* * * * *

. . . Yes, the dreams and aspirations that for over a half a century had cheered the sordid lot of

thousands, that had caused the death of many and the sufferings of more—they were now about to become actualities.

Europe had entered upon the Great Awakening.

Was Asia awakening, too?

END OF THE THIRD BOOK

THE FOURTH BOOK

CHAPTER I

THE PAN-GERMANIC UNION

THE Great Awakening?

It was the Great Awakening that called forth that activity which Major Savill had reported as extant at Wesel. For The Great Awakening, too, the heavily-laden barges and river-steamer, that he had so daringly taken note of, had been furtively stationed along the mid-Rhine, at every obscure wharf and in the guarded backwaters bending around the river fortresses of Germany.

And once more history was repeating itself. Even as aggression against Holland of a bygone age had ultimately proved to be the primary integer of the Decline and Fall of the Empire of Spain, so aggression against Holland of 1920 primarily brought about the Fall of the German Empire and shattered for ever that Greater Germany which has been the dream of the Hohenzollerns. Prometheus was about to be unbound, that Prometheus whose lot the high-aimed humanitarianism of England has indirectly gone so far to succour.

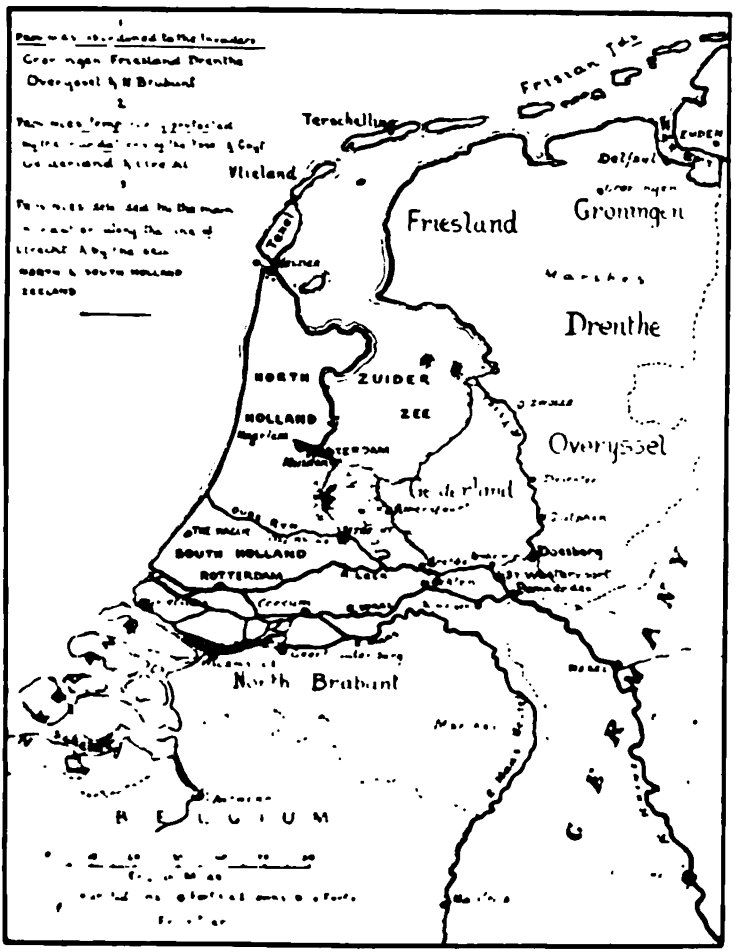
§ 1

On the night of June 13 large flotillas of armoured

gun-boats, from Dusseldorf and Cologne, were seen steaming down the Rhine. As they filed past the forts of Wesel, strings of barges towed by steamboats swung out into mid-stream, and followed them on towards the Netherlands frontier. The town of Wesel suddenly awoke into excitement, and at the sidings of its station troops forthwith commenced to entrain quickly and with the precision of a smooth-working though intricate organism. Along the three railways converging on this fortress came at brief intervals a long succession of military trains that were shunted on to the northern line en route for the invasion. And at their frontier bases, the enemy's engineers and railway corps, which had arrived late the previous evening, were bending all energies to lengthen the sidings and platform accommodation.

Just after sundown guns and cavalry had started from Wesel for the south frontier of Holland, viâ the highways along the east bank of the Rhine. At the same time, too, an infantry brigade with cavalry and guns issued from Goch; they were the vanguard for the invasion of North Brabant. The Hanoverian troops also were moving by rail towards the lower Rhine, viâ Osnabruck and Munster; one brigade, embarking at Emden, was being ferried across the Ems estuary to Delfzyl.

This frontier town Holland immediately abandoned without loss of life, though several of the chief customs officials were captured on the first landing party seizing the outer and inner basins, the locks, the signal stations and official quarters. Owing to its unopposed disembarkation this brigade, one hour after midnight, was already setting out for its swift advance upon Groningen, soon to startle into surprise and terror



DEFENCE OF HOLLAND.

the peasantry inhabiting the monotonous miles of heath, pasture and well-drained fen land of West Friesland.

On the main or central advance column, working down the Rhine by land and water, the brunt of hostilities was to fall.

Colonel Taschenmascher, commanding officer of the frontier fortress of Pannerden, which defends the approach to Holland by the Rhine, had received orders to keep a vigilant watch upon the great waterway for the possession of which Germany had intrigued so long.

§ 2

It was at 11 p.m. that the leading vessel of the enemy's van flotilla, showing no lights and steaming at fifteen knots down-stream, turned the elbow of the river that lies just above the fortress. Instantly the blinding white ray of an armoured searchlight flashed through the twilight of the summer night. It swept across the water and became focussed on the vessel vividly illuming her deck crowded with infantry. The next second came the flash of a heavy gun, and its projectile sent up a cloud of spray fifty feet ahead of her, while from under the shadow of the fort a patrol boat dashed out towards the *Dusseldorf*, which promptly stopping her engines had signalled her consorts to do likewise.

The Dutch officer was peremptory in his challenge. Standing up in the sternsheets of his steamboat, as she held on alongside the gunboat's gangway, he informed her commander that the officer commanding at Pannerden had received orders to let no vessel pass without scrutiny; that in any case no armed vessel could

proceed without having obtained permission from the State authorities.

"I am perfectly plain with you," he continued. "German officers, we all know, don't mind taking risks; but, there are a large number of electrically controlled mines in the stream here—just under you, and further down-river. His Excellenz, Colonel Taschenmascher, is of a peremptory decision. . . . You understand. You may seize me. You may proceed. But——" And without doubt the significant heave of the lieutenant's shoulder hastened the officer's conclusion.

Forthwith the *Dusseldorf* signalled her consorts to retire up-stream, and following them betook herself round the elbow. The Dutch patrol boat surged back to the landing-steps. But till daylight filled the hollow of the sky did the searchlight sweep the Rhine where it flows into Netherlands territory. It was then that the smoke of many steamers was observed, away up-stream over the low banks to eastward.

"Ja! Ja!" the gallant Taschenmascher is reported to have said, phlegmatic as ever on the report being given him. "They are coming at last, they are. Their General Staff has taken twenty years to make up its mind to try conclusions with us. Ja! Ja! let it be so. . . . We will take our supper now."

At 12.50 a.m. an escort of German hussars with an officer and a flag of truce was stopped by a Dutch patrol one mile from Pannerden. On the ensign commanding pointing out that they were on Netherlands territory and requesting them to retire, the German officer, a major of cavalry, answered that if the ensign would take his letter and give him his acknowledgment for it he was quite ready to

retire to the Netherlands frontier post; which, however, he did not say had been captured twenty minutes previously and was now held by a Jager battalion and a lancer regiment.

Ensign Kersuel took the letter; and the major said he would wait two hours at the frontier post for a reply. Indeed at that hour, the Germans were in no hurry. At the nearest frontier siding, two howitzer batteries were still being detrained.

General von Drachenstein's letter, which is preserved in the Netherlands Archives Department at the Hague, was addressed to Pannerden's commandant.

'In response,' von Drachenstein said, 'to the wishes of that vast body of loyal sons of the Netherlands, who are desirous of preserving all their local liberties while yet uniting themselves to their brothers throughout the German Empire and making the Rhine a free German river from source to sea,' the Kaiser had directed the VIIth and Xth Army Corps to enter the Netherlands as friendly allies in order to prevent any foreign interference with the Pan-Germanic Union. Colonel Taschenmascher was therefore requested to arrange forthwith for the joint occupation of Pannerden Fortress by Dutch and German troops, and at the same time to place no obstacle in the course of the flotillas now on their journey seaward 'in order to assert before Europe the freedom of that true German river, the Rhine.' However, if by five o'clock the desiderated answer was not received the Imperial orders were to take 'strong and emphatic measures to secure the freedom of the German waterway.'

Colonel Taschenmascher at once sent back his brief answer. He curtly declined to discuss politics, and

stated that the river was as open as ever to commerce; but, as his orders were to allow no vessels of war or bearing hostile units to pass Pannerden, he would resist any and all attempts at coercion. And as he was better acquainted with the smell of gunpowder than questions of State he desired no further communications persuasive of treachery and disloyalty to Queen and Country.

In the tremendous struggle that was now trying the manhood of nations there is no figure more outstanding for splendid staunchness than this of Colonel Taschenmascher. His squab, strong-built person and taciturn face stand out for an instant or two amid the bloody phantasmagoria of war as the very symbols of Holland's enduring greatness—her doggedness, her grave pertinacity.

From intelligence gathered by countrymen, who had come in from the frontier, Colonel Taschenmascher had already wired a long informative message to Headquarters at Utrecht, and had taken on himself the responsibility of ordering the local authorities at Arnheim, Doesberg, Zutphen, Deventer, Zwolle and Kampen to open the sluices, by sunrise, along the line of the river Yssel unless Utrecht telegraphed to the contrary. He had also warned the commandants at the fortresses of Westervoort and Ochten to meet attack from the rivers if Pannerden fell. General von Drachenstein's message he had duly communicated to the Hague.

Yet before his answer reached von Drachenstein, the enemy had already seized Zevenaar. Here no resistance was encountered, a handful of Pan-Germans welcoming the General with a brief address and cheering when the German Colours were displayed with

the Netherlands tricolour at the Town Hall. And then by 5 a.m. Pannerden—not to her commandant's surprise!—was hotly attacked by the gunboats, their fire a little later being reinforced by two field-howitzer batteries now at the front. Pannerden instantly replied.

By 5.30 a.m. the heavy guns mounted in the armoured cupola commanding the Rhine had obliterated the *Dusseldorf*, *Kalk* and *Engers*, the great shells completely wrecking the gunboats which, drifting broadside on, settled to the bottom and blocked the fairway. Their consorts took themselves out of range and ceased firing.

At 6.5 a.m., however, the two batteries of 20-in. howitzers, that had been brought up from the nearest railway siding, reinforced the general cannonading, and firing from behind their great breastworks, the bags and gabions of which had been fetched ready filled, began to inflict much damage with their high explosive shells. But with a steady roll of fire Pannerden replied, and that accurately.

§ 3.

In the rear of the advance, operations went on busily. At Zevenaar, troops and artillery and material for the attack on the fortress of Westervoort were being landed from the heavy trains that had been brought up from the frontier. A column of Jagers had made a dash for Doesborg. They found to their dismay that the waters of the Yssel and the Aa were already converting the low-lying fields into lakes and marshes.

On every farm northward of the Zuyder Zee the people of the lowlands were now driving their animals on to the dykes and embanked roads, where, alas, the long arms of the windmills were now stationary. Here as everywhere there had been but the briefest warning of the outbreak of War, and the enemy obtained much live stock, particularly on the Borg road. There the Jagers secured rich booty, and sent back a large number of 'rations on foot' to their base at Zevenaar.

That evening, just after sundown, they stormed, if storming it may be called, the open town of Doesborg. Little resistance was found in the streets, where the gallant burghers who had dared to take up arms for their country were remorselessly shot down without being called upon to surrender—as an example to others, so the German Staff subsequently explained. But at the Town Hall, where a small band of schutterji, or local militia, had barricaded themselves, there was an obstinate defence for more than an hour, before their cartridges gave out, and the Jagers could rush it at the point of the bayonet. Out of the seventy-three Hollanders, only twenty-one were taken alive.

Ah, the old spirit was yet alive. Not in vain did the south-east wind carry afar the thunder of the guns, so ominous in the very regularity of their ceaseless reverberations. For now, too, upon the fortress of Westervoort, five and a half miles to the north-west of Pannerden, the enemy's heavy ordnance and howitzers were splashing their projectiles, starring and dinting the truncated armoured casemates, and pounding the face of granite and cement parapets, curtains, and traverses into slivers and broken masonry.

§ 4

At Pannerden all day long the fight went on, salvo after salvo, shattering the steel-clad face of the fort; and, in return, altering the shape of the ground, as shells from the armoured cupola's great guns burst in broad flashes of lurid flame and clouds of brownish smoke against the sandbag batteries; and the guns to landward smote and often devastated the Germans heavy artillery, notwithstanding their half-canopies of thick steel.

Unequal though the contest was, for Commandant Taschenmascher's garrison had not been maintained on a war footing, Pannerden was proving a much harder nut to crack than the German Staff had ever expected.

At 9 p.m., June 14, when the dusk, deepened by the pall of smoke overhead, and the heat-mist rising off the Rhine, had lapsed into darkness, three battalions, formed in storming columns, swept across the slackening fire of lead, nickel and steel, and hurled themselves at the battered north front of the fortress. Shells shrieked out upon them, and tore pathways down the columns, obliterating companies, and blinding many men with human pulp and mangled bodies of comrades. Over the crest of the fortification, demarcated in the shrieking darkness by the flashing of the guns, star-shells and pyrotechnic lights flared out and revealed the masses of racing men. Yet amidst the hurricane of metal poured in upon them the German infantry struggled forward to the ditches, and threw in their fascines. Then suddenly they melted away; and every gun in the German

line broke out into furious crashing with projectiles.

At 11.34 Pannerden was again attacked by storming parties. On, on, they charged, across the zone of fire, and into the ditches. In the rain of death spouting down on them they filled the ditches—filled them as their fathers had done in the Hundred Years' War, with the bodies of their dead and wounded, and gained the parapet above.

There were no cries for 'Quarter' as the attack poured over and carried the works with the bayonet. The Hollanders fought to the death—there were few prisoners—none unwounded. Colonel Taschenmascher was found next day among the heap of slain, blocking the traverse of the north bastion, his left hand clutching his opponent's right wrist, his broken sword embedded in the Westphalian's breast.

Though the fortress was taken, its armoured cupola, commanding the river, maintained an obdurate firing with its two undamaged guns.

So severely were they felt that to the nearest of the heavy howitzer batteries—scourged again and again as dawn came on by bursting shrapnel, reaping gun numbers down—was given the order to cease firing. Lack of ammunition and stores, the Germans thought, would soon compel the cupola to surrender.

At 6.10 a.m., that morning, its firing did cease; but to the enemy's wrath and surprise Captain van Cortlandt refused to evacuate his post.

"Surrender, you ask me?" he replied, from the half-opened armoured port, over to the north-west curtain of the fort where the officer of truce was standing, a little in advance of von Drachenstein and several of his staff. "Not while I hold the river, Herr Offizier. No."

Most certainly, van Cortlandt's stubbornness cost Germany dear, for she now had to fight against time in consequence of the inundation.

To Holland, 'in which men live in the hold as if by nature,' an army is but a secondary protection. Her real line of defence is the Sea, and already at Ymuiden on the Zuyder Zee the Sea was swirling and racing through the ocean sluices, to flow deep across the low flat lands. From the networks of rivers and canals the waters were also slowly gathering, foot by foot over the rich fields and smiling landscape, to invade the houses of homely comfortable ease and the low, white cottages with their bright tile-facings and quaint, thatched roofs.

When the sun stood at noon that bright summer day, everywhere east of the main Dutch Defence —the lines of Utrecht—the water was inundating the streets of the grey old towns with their fringes of towers, belfries and pinnacles, their rambling roofs and scrolly weathercocks.

Once more after the space of three hundred odd years Holland was about to ride at anchor, to save herself from the oppressor.

'Cut the dykes.'

Yet the German Staff had long foreseen and made preparation for this difficulty. Their engineers had that morning blocked up the sluices which the defenders had demolished at Doesborg ; already had they set the windmills and hydraulic rams there pumping anew to prevent the rising of the waters well down towards Zutphen. At every available base along the north-east and east frontiers divisions of engineers and tens of thousands of navvies were quickly being detrained to assist in damming back the water.

In truth, Germany was intending to make use, on a gigantic scale, of her power as the one nation in Europe that is endued with phenomenal capacities for military engineering.

§ 5

Meantime Pannerden still delayed the full utilization of the forces combining in the invaders' line of advance. The menace of the mined river compelled the German gunboats, together with the long flotillas and their most requisite supplies of munitions, to remain at anchor round the elbow of the river instead of most materially aiding the bombardment of Westervoort, prior to the reinforcement of the heavy howitzer batteries from Pannerden.

Only once that morning was a passage essayed. Two flat-bottomed barges, both laden with stones, were sent down-stream, in a feint to draw the range of van Cortlandt's mine scheme. Floating on the current the two barges came down the further side of the stream, so near to the bank that a man at a running jump might almost have boarded either of them. Amidst a breathless silence they surged placidly down-river, and with safety passed in line with the armoured cupola, and dropped far beyond. Yet even as a derisive 'Hoch' of jubilation rasped ten thousand throats a small geyser of mud and foamy water was belched up beneath them and they seemed to dissolve into pieces. Not till late that evening—after a picked crew from the gunboats had crept in under cover of the cupola itself, and successfully dragged for the terminals of the firing cables, despite the heavy rifle fire poured in on their frail craft—

was the river squadron able to pass during the darkness, and at last co-operate in the fierce attack on Westervoort, which surrendered at 10.25 in the forenoon.

The capture of Pannerden and Westervoort proved costly operations, putting in all 5,895 men out of action; yet time was now much more precious to the invaders than human life. This double coup-de-main, morover, cleared the advance to Arnheim. It was by the occupation of this place that the entire 'line' of the Yssel could be turned.

By the Netherlands Council of War this 'line,' however, was looked upon much as a mere line of outposts, and in their opinion it counted for little. Moreover no further stubborn defence east or south formed part of their swiftly-matured scheme. The police and the censor silenced the dissent of burghers and press.

In those provinces the German flying columns met with no resistance beyond an occasional skirmish, or here and there a stiff encounter with the schutterji, who proved intractable as their forefathers.

On June 15 when General von Drachenstein marched into Arnheim, with its quiet tree-lined avenues, shadow-haunted streets and great ancient church, his troops had not overrun much of North Brabant; but the country east of the Zuyder Zee had been abandoned to them. He then promptly proclaimed the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe, Overyssel and Gueldres as being under 'the high protection of the German Empire.' On the map it looked like the annexation of much of the Netherlands. To Her, matter-of-fact and retroactive, it was merely part of her plan of defence.

In front of the Germans, then, the military line of the Eem and the Geyt—the 'Gueldres line' of defence—was now being held by a weak force of Dutch outposts. But before them, from Fort Ochten on the Waal northwards to the Zuyder Zee, the inundation was still spreading like one vast lagoon swallowing up the slow dun-coloured streams, flowing upon the flat green meadows and fields of waving grain, and the polders and tall wispy trees with their sparse straggling tops waving above the sullen flood.

Further westward it was that the Dutch based their actual line of defence. It was along the line of Utrecht. Its centre was that old city, its left at Ymuiden, where the sea waters were roaring inland through the sluices. To the south, the Vecht, the 'old Rhine,' the Leck and the Waal, were flooding the unbroken, ample expanse of rich country stretching away in front of the road-crowned embankments, where every approach was guarded by the thick green ramparts and dark armoured cupolas of low-lying forts. And on the extreme right (south) of the defence lay Gorcum with her massive batteries looking forth on a network of river and canal, now quickly merging into the shallow inland sea that was crossed by the narrow causeways carrying the battery-guarded highways.

Behind this 'line of Utrecht,' rendered strong by nature and science combined, and storied in imperishable memories of the Great Spanish War, Holland's two great cities, and her quiet old capital, the home of the Peace Congresses, awaited with confidence the issue of the struggle.

Already it had been marked by surprised and

gratified observers that through the aggressive action of Germany the social democrats, hitherto irreconcilable, were becoming welded into energetic members of the general defence. Germany, that has always sought to kill social democracy, was in the end to be slain by the militant action of that vast brotherhood.

§ 6

This is how the military situation stood late on June 15, 1920, in so far as the Netherlands is concerned.

Of the naval matters it may briefly be said that the forts of de Helder and Willemsoord, reinforced by 10 submarines, commanding the channel leading into the Zuyder Zee, had on the early forenoon of June 14 succeeded in repulsing the attacking squadron under Vice-Admiral Grötz, after a prolonged and heavy bombardment; and the enemy's mosquito fleets raiding Ymuiden, the Hook of Holland, the west naval base, Hellevoetsluis, Brielle, and the mouth of the Maas had been driven back and broken in the dash to seaward of Admiral Tjeenk's two battle-squadrons and the flotilla of defending torpedo craft.

At Arnheim, General von Drachenstein, flushed with the ease of conquest, halted till his river flotilla, convoyed by the armoured gunboats, had steamed down the Leck, and aided by a force of troops, conveyed in barges, attacked Fort Grebbe.

By now the Hanoverians had seized Zutphen on the Yssel, and were rapidly repairing the railway at the many places where the schutterji had destroyed it.

The Xth Corps was moving direct on Utrecht,

threading the crossing of the 'Gueldres line,' where the inundation was proving the least obstacle, on that slight swell of ground which separates the drainage area of the Eem and the Geyt rivers, south of Amersfort.

In the south, Maestricht was already occupied; and the German flying columns swept Brabant. This province had found itself 'placed under the august protection' of the Kaiser.

In fine, the Empire of the German Confederation —though curtailed, on the east, by the refusal of Austria to take part in the hostilities, by reason of her long-standing friendship with the French Republic, and, possibly, lest Italy should snatch Trieste and the further Adriatic coast from her—was expanding its north-west frontier, almost as quickly as the grey-green floods were spreading, along the front of the Netherlands Defence.

But the weakness of a defence depending on inundation in front of its fortified line is that it is almost as difficult for the defence to issue forth along the narrow causeways to attack as it is for the invaders to advance in force. The Hanoverians, after establishing protection for the main points they held in the east provinces, could now hold in but minor strength the crossings of the 'Gueldres line.'

Grebbe had been taken, and the engineers were busy on the sluices of the Leck above the captured fort. The inundation between the Leck and Utrecht railway, alas, was now slowly diminishing. Without waiting for its entire subsidence, General von Drachenstein at once began to ferry his troops down the Leck, by means of his huge flotillas, and soon he had strong columns moving west of the 'Gueldres line.' Amers-

foort threatened by one of them was abandoned. The second line of defence was in the possession of the Germans.

They moved along the swampy east margin of the waters that guarded the main defence, and reconnoitred the Utrecht forts, exchanging shots with some of them; but they made no serious attack. On the east border, their engineers were toiling at that gigantic undertaking, which for many years has been diligently discussed by the strategic writers and lecturers on the German General Staff. It is the only possible operation, save some means of treachery, making direct for the subjugation of the Netherlands.

The waters covering the centre of the 'Utrecht line' flow from the Leck and its offshoot known as the Oude Rhyn; the Leck itself is one of the main streams of the Rhine delta, that network of rivers flowing through the richest part of Holland. And at Pannerden the Germans were energetically constructing a dam to turn the main stream of the Rhine into the Leck.

A few miles further, near Arnheim, their engineers were erecting another barrier to dam the Leck, and send what was the left of the Rhine stream down the river Yssel. It was an undertaking for Titans; but the dry season made it much easier than had been anticipated.

So in front of the lines of Utrecht General von Drachenstein waited impatiently while tens of thousands of navvies worked for him on the east border. He was waiting, too, for the issue of events on the sea. Yet, as was soon to be revealed, military victory, not naval defeat, was to prove the turning point of the war in Europe.

On June 17, all that was left of the Kingdom of the Netherlands was her fringe of embanked islands and the old north-west province. This was Her citadel. Here She kept the brave tricolour flying.

The Allies were moving.

Great Britain's remaining naval forces tardily massed themselves, owing to shortages in personnel and stores, while the defects left unrepaired in certain of the great vessels maintained in the reserve were a cause of disastrous delay. Yet now was France pouring her many thousands of soldiery against the German legions upon her frontier, where in the central gap, between Epinal and Toul, they had entered upon a swift initiative.

. . . France was marching. And this time She was the Liberator of Europe. No longer prophetic rang the ennobling strains of the 'Marseillaise.'

They proclaimed the actual Truth.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

YES, as has been pointed out, the crucial point in the rising climax of world-wide hostilities was already at hand. The fires of war had flared up quickly. As quickly were they to fall back and become smothered beneath the breakers of a vast reaction, more overwhelming and decisive than the waves of the French Revolution.

The course of hostilities in Europe, as well as in Asia, was to be directly affected by the events of the next few days. Even as Waterloo was won at Trafalgar, so 'Die Millionenschlacht'—'La Débâcle,' or the 'Great Overthrow,'—as the nations immediately concerned termed the astounding affair—gravely influenced the results of far-separated conflicts such as the great naval engagements in the western seas, in the Pacific, and off Singapore; and, too, the fierce land fighting in Australia and the Philippines. It evoked the Great Awakening, that forerunner of the upheaval which altered for better for worse the social and economic fabrics of the civilized nations.

How ironical and just is the working of destiny—destiny that is no mysterious and inscrutable phenomenon, but the outward manifestation of the fulfilment of natural laws.

Great Britain—the Power sacrificing national inter-

est, nay, the safety of her Empire in the pursuit of betterment, of humanitarianism—was to fail, through inefficiency thus incurred, from achieving the supreme stage of her high calling as the Protagonist of Liberty. But the Power that knew Herself, that had realized her limitations, She it was that struck off the shackles still binding awakening democracy. Through her agency the harvest sown by successive Peace Congresses was securely garnered at last.

§ 1

Concerning the Great Overthrow of militarism, historians and military experts have written at great length; but for concise and intimate details of its swiftly culminating stages the account furnished by Major Savill still remains unchallenged. It is now given for the first time to the public with only such excisions as have been deemed necessary on behalf of official reticence.

Obtaining appointment on the outbreak of European hostilities as attaché to General Harfield accompanying the French army of the Vosges, Savill, whose valuable qualifications as much as potent influence had got him the post—he spoke French like a Frenchman, knew well many of the French General Staff, had a deep and accurate knowledge of the French army, and a brilliant record in Indian Frontier campaigning—immediately found himself posted in the second issue of the *Gazette*, June 15, 1920, for active service and detailed as a member of the military mission (Vosges) to France.

When, on the morning of June 16, the second-class armoured vessel, *Raleigh*, landed General Harfield

and Savill, together with the mails, at Calais, en route for Paris and the front—the cross-channel steamer traffic having been suspended, and the tunnel closed in accordance with the terms of the Convention entered into May 10, 1915, between Britain, France, Germany and the United States, securing their respective financial interests therein—the naval forces of Germany were everywhere showing a virulent offensive. The German Eagle in its war panoply had penetrated into the English Channel; Dover, Portsmouth and Cherbourg had had to stand on a sudden defensive.

Of the two British home fleets—three-fourths of which had to be drawn from vessels commissioned in reserve—the North Sea division based on Sheerness-Chatham had on the afternoon of June 15 suddenly put to sea. Its vessels were fully manned but with crews pitchforked into them at random, and handicapped with too many white-faced bewildered units. The annual ten days' training of reservists had preserved neither alert, responsive knowledge nor physical systems once habituated to the sea.

The British nation had seen fit to cease from the costly but only effective method of organizing and training naval personnel to meet the sudden strain and crises of war—by keeping nearly all efficient ships in actual commission entailing sea service for two-thirds of the year. With the insertion of the thin edge of the wedge, July, 1906, in the creation of a Home Fleet 'in commission in reserve' with cruises 'as frequently as practicable,' naval organization and fitness, had gradually lapsed into a state comparable in a way only to that obtaining in the 'Nineties.' In the Fashoda crisis (1898), effective mobilization of the British Navy—on a war footing, capable

of encountering hostile squadrons—could not have been completed within twelve days of incessant and frantic working.

Britain has never succeeded in organizing her naval or military forces at all effectively to meet a sudden crisis eventuating in times of peace. In peace She forgets war. And it is but a kind of cowardliness, this deliberate shortsightedness of her people, this ignoring by them of the lessons of the past. They are cognizant enough of their failing. Extraordinary apathy, theirs! One which points the short and awful road towards the rapine and dismemberment of Empire.

§ 2

As the official pilot took the *Raleigh* into Calais, threading the minefields—which the French wisely still retained in use—and the lines of the flotillas of defence and the torpedo-craft, submarines and their parent vessels for patrol of the south side of the Straits, Savill, who was on the bridge watching the animated scene, heard him comment on the welcome fact that at Brest on the night of the 13th lighters conveying ammunition had been towed out to the outer batteries, while at Toulon 11,250 men working night and day had just equipped the second French squadron for sea.

And while speeding Paris-ward Harfield and he read in the *Patrie* and other journals—what was not fresh news to Savill—that the French dockyards had not been lagging, that the 'patriotic' interests of the 'proletairiat des arsénaux' had throttled routine obstruction.

Yet the Major knew more.

He knew that France, the real France, the 'Land Power' that had realized her limitations, was moving to the conflict along her east frontier, with all the completeness, the inevitableness, of a stupendous, high-pulsing entity.

. . . Yes, France was marching. . . .

CHAPTER III

EN ROUTE FOR THE VOSGES

THE NARRATIVE OF MAJOR SAVILL, I.S.C., MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF GENERAL A. P. HARFIELD, V.C., D.S.O., BRITISH ATTACHÉ TO THE FRENCH ARMY OF THE VOSGES, 1920.

PARIS was buzzing with excitement when General Harfield and I arrived.

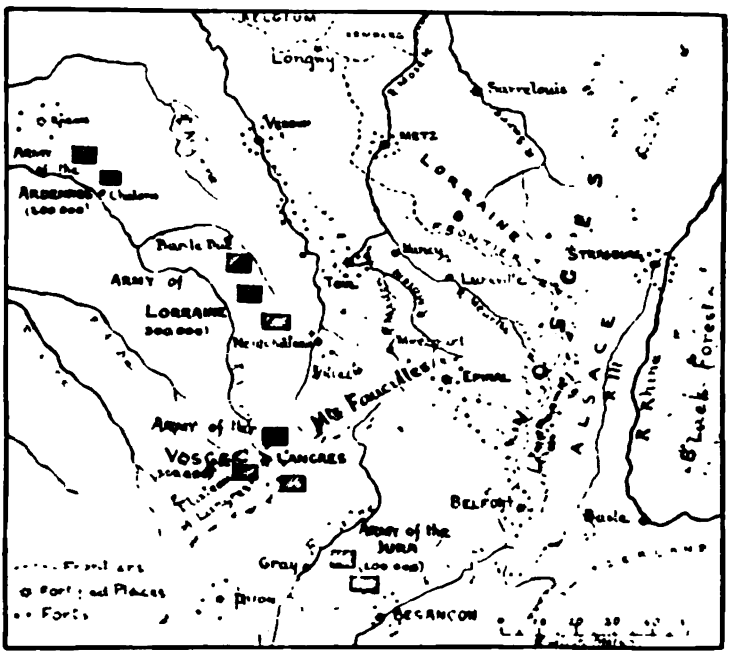
In the streets and along the boulevards the French and British flags were everywhere, flying side by side. As we drove along the boulevard on our way to the Embassy newsvendors came rushing along the street, calling out some news ; men sprang up from the little tables before the cafés, they rushed out of the shops, they climbed down from electric omnibuses, and almost tore the papers from them. Harfield told our chauffeur to slow down.

"I hope to Heaven," he said shortly, "Fairfax has hammered that German fleet reported to be making north. Or is their other squadron attacking the west coast ports ? "

A newsboy thrust an *Intransigeant* towards him.

"Voyez, Monsieur," he said, "un désastre. Nancy aux mains de l'ennemi."

Harfield threw him half a franc, which the urchin took, and dashed off without troubling about the change !



THE FRENCH CONCENTRATION OF THE EASTERN FRONTIER

[illegible]

As the [illegible] news. It was [illegible] [illegible] world.

[illegible]

[illegible] column.

[illegible]

[illegible] without [illegible]

A short [illegible] from the War Office. [illegible] was only abandoned [illegible] unexpectedly [illegible]

'In any [illegible] confidence in the future [illegible] that it has been judged [illegible] by abandoning without [illegible] historic capital of Lorraine [illegible] inhabitants, which place [illegible] mand of the invader.

'How they must suffer our brave children of Lorraine, to see arriving not our avenging vanguard but the insulting cohorts of the Kaiser.

'But let us not complain. Our gifted strategists

assure us the incident is without importance. Let us trust theirs is the voice of well-founded confidence. They have their plan. Let us await its development. Yet others, the generals of fifty years ago, also had theirs!'

"Not very pleasant reading," said Harfield; "what do you make of it?"

"I know the paper," said I, "an opposition journal, with a habit of growling at the Government. As for Nancy, it has long been known the town would not be defended. Too near the frontier! To make a fight there, would be to pivot the whole campaign on what is, after all, a secondary point. I have talked over these possibilities with officers here. When France does strike—her blow will be a heavy one."

In the naval situation there was little fresh, except that the Brest division had put to sea early that morning, consequent on a wireless message, not divulged, from the *Châteaurenault*. The *Jeanne d'Arc* had crawled into Cherbourg at 5.30 a.m., almost a total wreck, kept afloat with difficulty; astern of her, and escorted by three destroyers, *Fürst Bismarck*, with her forecastle, fore barbette and forward superstructure tangles of scrap metal, and in her port side a huge ragged fissure, reaching almost to the water-line, where a 10-inch projectile had blown up her port suction-gas compressor. News to hearten Frenchmen!

But of our own naval movements, owing to the strict censorship, I could glean nothing new.

§ I

We spent only one day in Paris. The Headquarters staff, at the capital, communicated the fullest information to those of us detailed to accompany the corps d'armée forming the field forces.

We were shown their plan of campaign. The barrier of fortresses fronting Germany, from Belfort on the right to Verdun on the left, had been heavily reinforced, and the frontier guards were retiring upon them. Behind this barrier two main armies of operation, each 300,000 strong, were concentrating; the Army of Lorraine with its headquarters at Bar-le-Duc, the Army of the Vosges with its headquarters at Langres. South and north of these central masses two reserve armies, each 200,000 strong, were being rapidly formed of the reserve battalions; northwards the Army of the Ardennes, and southward the Army of the Jura; they were to reinforce the main armies, or, if required, assist the Powers on right and left to protect their neutrality, in case the Germans ventured on a turning movement round the fortress barrier.

But the million of men, looking eastwards towards the Rhine, did not exhaust the armed strength of the soldiers of France. On the Lower Seine and in the northern and western departments the Army of the North was fast assembling.

I was all eagerness to get away from Paris—eastward, where history was soon to be made on a titanic scale. But transit was by no means easily arranged at an hour's notice.

The railways eastward had been organized on war conditions. Only a few trains each day were de-

voted to ordinary traffic, and none of them were expresses.

To utilize the immense zone of railways to the utmost, there had been adopted for each main line a time-table that provided for the steady flow to military bases of heavy trains moving at a moderate speed and following each other at short intervals. Shunting and passing of trains was reduced to a minimum, and every system was utilized to its fullest in moving immense masses of men and material. The long military platforms and miles of judiciously located sidings laid down years before, prevented any accumulation at the further end of the journeys; and cross lines received the ceaseless stream of empties flowing back to the centre, north and south. Is not the arrangement of France's entire railway system proof of her innate strategic skill ?

For members of the general staff and the transmission of important despatches and everything that required immediate attention, there was an express service of motor cars by road. In this way was the work done that in former times would have been assigned to special express trains.

It was a curious evolution this—the iron road becoming the medium, of slow traffic, and the long tree-bordered chaussées, laid down in old days for the post-chaise and diligence, once more the means of swift travelling. The ordinary mails were forwarded by train, but for registered letters paying an extra fee, and small parcels also charged at an extra rate, there was also a special automobile service. Indeed, so carefully had all contingencies been provided for, that there had already been issued new postage stamps, the device of which was a motor car with wings on its wheels. These were used for the express service.

Throughout France, encouragement of the motor car and wagons has rendered unnecessary the adoption of the mono rail such as we have at home.

It was by motor car therefore that I started for Langres in the company of a General Staff adjutant joining headquarters. General Harfield and two other officers were following at once.

§ 2

The start was made from the Automobile Club in the Place de la Concorde, now the headquarters of the motor service. At reduced speed the car sped along the Rue de Rivoli, through the cross traffic of the Place de la Bastille, and down the winding Faubourg that in the days of the Revolution had so often bristled with pikes. The pace was increased in the wide avenue of the Cours de Vincennes; soon the barrier was passed, and then the many arched bridge of Joinville, beneath which flows the Marne to meet the Seine; and now we were in the open country, radiant with the light of early morning. Then a touch of the gear control, and the car raced onward, with a storm of white dust whirling behind. Only for a couple of minutes did we slow down, to work through the narrow street of Champigny, and ascend the slope of the plateau beyond, to the inn of Bel-Air.

"My grandfather was killed here," said the French officer to me, "at the head of his mobiles on the day of the great sortie. My father was wounded, fighting beside him. That was fifty years ago. Ah, we have waited too long to settle the account."

Faster we sped along, by the long even slope to Provins, and faster still by the descent to the Upper

Seine valley. What a glorious country it looked on that bright morning—the wide fenceless fields tilled like a garden, the shady avenues of the roads, the farms with their huge barns, and the villages, where now were only old men, women and children, for the fighting manhood of France was in barrack, camp and bivouac. Within an hour from crossing the Joinville bridge, we dashed across the bridge of Nogent-sur-Seine, and hooted through the main street of the little town, then on, on, at racing speed by the road following the curving bank of the Seine for many a mile. To me there came a sense of wild elation in this rush over the smooth track between the endless avenues of trees, the wind whistling in our ears like a storm, and the sun in our faces; and before us the hope of coming victory, in which my comrade, if not myself, was to bear a part.

As we slowed down into Troyes I noticed the streets were gay with flags, and heard the church bells were ringing merrily; and nearing the Boulevard Gambetta we also heard the strains of the 'Marseillaise' and the cheering of a great crowd. At the crossing of the boulevard we had to stop; a regiment was marching to the station. Its long column of fours extended far away under the trees of the boulevard. It was just like a moving stream of leaves and flowers, for in the muzzles of the sloped rifles, rising and falling with the rhythmic tread of the troops, were the green boughs and little bouquets which the men had picked up as they were flung from balcony and window. The crowds on either side cheered themselves hoarse, and the troops cheered back. As I told my companions, it was more like a return in triumph than a departure for war.

He smiled. "Ah! La Guerre, la Guerre," he mur-

mured significantly. It was then the thought struck me—France was about to vindicate herself, France, the old scourge of the Teutons.

At last the way was clear. On we went again, over the Seine, and up and down the round-backed slope that divides it from the Aube valley, through Bar-sur-Aube and by Chaumont, rising mile by mile to the central plateau of France, then at times between vine-clad slopes; and at last out on the sun-baked level towards the isolated height where Langres stands dominating the lands around it.

When we had passed within its outlying forts I found we were in a vast camp, or rather bivouac, for there were few tents standing. The villages and farms were crowded with troops. Long lines of piled arms, guns and wagons parked in rows, horses picketed by the hundred, lines of camp kettles over the smoking kitchen trenches, battalions at drill, fatigue parties unloading supplies—all made up a scene of busy life as far as the eye could reach. And as the car wound its way up the zigzag road to the Porte de France the view grew wider and wider, and we saw still further and further the spreading camp of the Army of the Vosges. In the town itself, soldiers were everywhere; and the headquarters at the Prefecture buzzed with activity like a hive of bees.

The news from the front consisted of endless skirmishes between the advanced troops and the German vanguards. Rumour said the enemy were preparing to attempt a coup de main against Toul and the barrier forts to the north of it.

"The Germans," said General Bracieux, one of the General Staff, "have been laughing at our screen of forts, and calling it a wall of China. We shall let them

break some of their teeth on it; then, when we are quite ready—and not a day too soon—the reckoning will come. Meanwhile you should see the Army of the Jura, and also visit Belfort. You will get interesting matters to report on."

I took the hint. I visited the camps round the great railway of Gray. Then I went on to Belfort and saw the historic fortress and its newer defences. From the ridge of Bessoncourt, three miles to the eastward, I observed the advanced fort above the village fire a few long range shots at a German reconnaissance from Mulhausen; otherwise on this part of the frontier the advanced troops were then simply watching each other.

That same day, however, came news of an impending crisis—of victory (so Berlin said) won under the Kaiser's eyes. One wing of the German army, well provided with heavy artillery and high explosive shells, was attacking the eastward forts of Toul and the three barrier forts to the northwards. The corps that held Nancy had stormed the wooded plateau of La Haye. The second German army, a mixed force of Prussians and South Germans, was pouring into the gap in the barrier line between Toul and Epinal.

Afterwards I found that little credence had been given by the great mass of Frenchmen to the official note which explained that so far no effort had been made to do more than delay the invaders' march, 'for strategical and tactical reasons.' Too many soldiers and civilians thought of what they had read or heard of the famous plans of Trochu, and wondered if some such disillusion was not forthcoming. There were some of the civilians who talked of 'treason' according to the *Soleil*; but the fatal cry 'nous sommes trahis' was

not raised in camp or garrison, where it would have been sternly suppressed.

§ 3

But at last we were really moving.

The Army of the Jura swung round half-left, and by a long march placed the heads of its columns along the Vesoul-Langres road. The Army of the Vosges spread its right like a fan over every road and track leading into the hill country of the Faucilles, while its left spread out by Neufchâteau, already held by an advanced corps. Northwards the Army of Lorraine extended the line along the barrier screen between Toul and Verdun.

There were being set in battle array 800,000 men along this enormous front; and its left, 300,000 strong, held a fortified line, already well garrisoned, on which to fight its first day's battle. If the Germans were resolute in pushing on at any cost, the further advance of it through their screen of troops would cut in on their flank and rear. In the centre, they had already pressed their van forward into the midst of a large semicircle held by half a million of foemen; but they would not have ventured so far if it had not been that they themselves were in heavy force, and had the inspiration of what they counted as well-won strategic victories.

It was to be a battle of giants, nay, the Armageddon of Europe.

A rapid exchange of messages with Langres brought me the permit to rejoin headquarters. It then was past midnight. My means of transport was a car, placed at my disposal by the commandant of Belfort.

At the village of Lure I was roused from my first doze, curled up in a rug in the tonneau, to show my pass to the officer in charge of a cavalry post. A few miles further on I was again stopped. A great fire blazed by the roadside; a group of men muffled in great coats and blankets slept beside it, and the rest with a young lieutenant were under arms. On the slopes above the road to the left there was a glare of many fires. Away to the right, the white light of arc lamps showed a wayside station on the Belfort line. There was a noise of wagons being shunted, and a rumble of carts on the road near by.

"We had a very long march yesterday," said the lieutenant to me. "Yes, monsieur, we belong to a division of the 16th corps, Gascons from Montpellier down by the Mediterranean. We belong to the right column of the Jura Army. It may be hard to get beyond Vesoul, for the Army will soon be crossing the Vesoul-Langres road at many points. However, bon voyage!"

As I approached Vesoul, I came on the bivouac of another division. The men were all astir, though it was yet dark, with only grey signs of dawn in the east. They were drinking their early coffee and eating the 'pain de munition' round the fires. They were soon to be on the move.

In Vesoul, where the town was awake, and artillery, the reserve of the 16th corps, rumbled through the streets,—heavy quickfirers, with shields of steel fitted over the trunnions, and three ammunition wagons to each gun—I found General Damorel, commanding the corps, at the Hôtel de l'Europe in the Avenue de la Gare and taking the early coffee with his staff. I was made welcome, and found the General and his chief

of the staff willing to give me any information or help I needed.

"All the news is good," said Damorel. "The occupation of Nancy, the withdrawal of our covering troops, the capture of the plateau of La Haye, after a fight just obstinate enough to make the Kaiser think we meant to hold it, have encouraged the enemy to march for the gap in our fortress line—the gap that was left on purpose. They have masked the south front of Toul and crushed two of its forts, they are holding the garrison of Epinal, though to tell the truth that garrison has orders not to trouble them seriously yet. They are pouring forward. There will be fighting on a front of thirty leagues, the biggest fight there has ever been in Europe. The headquarters of the Army of the Vosges will be at Lamarche in the Faucilles or beyond it to-day. . . . But, Major Savill, do not go by Langres. The roads on that side will not be easy, the left of the Army of the Jura is streaming across them. You will do better if you take the country roads in front of our columns. You will be quite safe. We have a screen of light troops, cavalry, chasseurs, cyclists with machine guns on motor cars well out in front, and there are no Germans this side of the Saône. Run for Amance, cross the river about Corre—look here, on the map. . . . Thus . . . Then there is an easy journey to Lamarche by the southern Faucilles, and you should be there in two hours. There will soon be light enough."

A telegram to Harfield at headquarters, a hasty breakfast for myself and chauffeur, and I was on the road again.

The sun had risen, the mists that lay in the hollows told of a hot day. Picking my way by the cross

roads, I made for Amance; but early as it was, I found that I had not headed all the columns of the Jura Army.

At a turn of the road, I came upon a brigade of infantry moving northwards. The first sight was not impressive. The men were marching in the style peculiar to the French army when on service or manœuvres, and away from towns and cities—a style which is not showy but eminently practical. Fours are formed but the men march two deep on each side of the road, half of each four right and half left; there is no keeping step, each takes the stride that suits him best; and the order is 'arme à volonté,' each man carrying his rifle as he likes, slung or sloped or trailed or reversed.

Along the clear middle of the road, then, I slowly ran my car up the moving avenue of men, trying to raise as little dust as possible, and using just enough speed to get gradually ahead of them. One battalion was singing, the men of the regimental choral club leading, while all joined in the chorus. Many were smoking as they marched; they all stepped out well and held themselves erect, though each carried a load fit for a packhorse. Many of them had passed through the straps of their pack dry sticks, often half charred from the last bivouac fire, to be able to start the next one quickly; and thus, as each company carried its kettles, coffee could be made within a few minutes of a halt. The French understand campaigning better than any other European nation: they do not require to wait half-a-dozen hours for baggage trains.

From Amance I bore to the north-west, and where I crossed the Saône the bridge, and the little station on the neighbouring railway line, were held by pickets of local troops of the armée territoriale; and so, as all

the communications of the army were thus protected, it had not to leave a single fighting man behind as it advanced.

Beyond the river, on the road winding among the low hills of the Faucilles, the progress of the car was again and again checked by the advancing columns of the Army of the Vosges. To me, unaccustomed to such huge concentrations of troops, the sight was a new wonder. Yet I was seeing only a few fragments of the vast army that was moving up to the front—all swayed by the mind of one man.

To the rear, in his office at Vitry le Français, with the wire and the wireless apparatus and the telephone at his ear and elbow, he was moving regiments, divisions, corps and armies as a chess player moves his pieces and pawns. He was directing a million wills as one, all through the smooth working of co-ordinated organization and perfected discipline. His hands held the fate of France and the fortunes of her allies. . . .

As I neared Lamarche the chauffeur stopped the car and pointed north-east.

"Tiens!" he said, "c'est le canon." And I heard the dull sound of a far-off cannonade.

As we entered the town the roaring of the guns came more distinctly, punctuating the stillness in the morning air, yet none seemed to pay much attention to this indication that fighting had begun in earnest. In the long stony street I passed a battalion busy at their soup kettles, which were fixed across the dry water channels on each side of the street, the wood fires burning below them helped by the draft between the stones; and the men seemed to be chiefly concerned that the soup should be ready before they got the order to move. To the private on campaign, the intimate questions of

obtaining the wherewithal for bite and sup and sleep soon predominate over all other anxieties.

At Lamarche I met General Harfield, who gave me the amazing news of the course of the war in the East and Australia. He also told me that the advanced troops about us on both sides were now in touch from the neighbourhood of Contrexéville to the forest of Darney, but nothing serious had happened. He directed me, then, to proceed with the Aeronautical Company attached to the staff of the army; it was about to advance to a point on the Contrexéville road, in order to reconnoitre the German positions.

I would see, so said Lieutenant-Colonel Fuchard, Staff Officer (Aeronautic), a startling development in military balloon work which he hoped would have a striking effect on the coming battle.

A striking effect! It has almost revolutionized warfare on land.

§ 4

Leaving Lamarche by the Contrexéville road, I soon came in sight of the balloon detachment. It formed a long convoy of wagons of all descriptions, drawn by motor tractors. Attached to a smaller wagon was an inflated captive balloon, the great white sphere swaying at the end of a short length of rope that just allowed it to rise above the roadside trees.

When I overtook the convoy it had halted, the road in front being temporarily blocked. Some mounted gendarmes were trying to clear a way through the dense crowd of people that came streaming westward, from the Contrexéville direction. There were old men, women and children, and some were on foot and some

in country carts. They were driving a few cows with them; and on the carts were piled their belongings; and also their sick, and old bedridden men and women stretched on mattresses. Children were carrying their pets, a bird in a cage, a kitten or a rabbit in a basket. Dogs sat on the carts, or trotted alongside their owners.

This mixed crowd, that filled the whole width of the road as it passed along in strange silence, tired and dust-stained, formed but a small part of the general exodus which was taking place from the villages of the region soon to become the vast cockpit of Europe. And the battle had already begun. Eastward, I heard the cannonade rapidly deepening into a dull rolling, like the far-off muttering of a continuous thunderstorm.

Victory or defeat? Either meant that the same misery would extend to other regions; that another hundred villages would have to be evacuated by the old, the sick, and the feeble, driven by panic from their homes to huddle together under the sky by the roadside or in the fields.

The road was clear at last, and we all moved on.

Except for the large parties of refugees, it might have been a day of the annual manœuvres. From afar came low thunder of heavy guns, but nothing else told us that a battle was in progress. Here and there an infantry brigade came in sight, marching steadily across the fields, in column of route. Where a brigade of hussars had halted by the roadside, the men had actually installed themselves in a temporary bivouac; and, while their horses fed, with loosened girths, were cooking at the long rows of camp kettles. The acrid smoke from

their greenwood fires was drifting across the road and hanging in the air like a thick haze. The hussars were in good humour, and exchanged gay badinage with the convoy.

The absence of all excitement, the quiet business-like air of every one, officers and men, much impressed me ; I have seen more fuss, hurry, confusion, during a field day on Salisbury Plain ! Yet after all it is difficult to get excited when no one exactly knows what is going on in front ; and, too, fuss and hurry disappear, are swallowed up as it were, in the enormous numbers now in motion, in the huge distances involved, and the very magnitude of the fighting.

At last, we of the balloon detachment turned off the road, and halted beside a farm—a great square of massive buildings, houses, stables, barns and sheds. The winch of the captive balloon was manned, and on the rope being let out, the balloon rose steadily till it was at least a thousand feet high in the air. At the foot of the rope, a staff officer held a telephone receiver —in communication with his colleague up above.

In the farm, a field-telegraph office had been quickly installed and a line run out to the road side, where the detachment of sappers who accompanied the convoy had dug down and uncovered the underground postal cable, and, after testing it made the connexion with Lamarche. Meanwhile the officers and men of the balloon company had uncovered the two navigable balloons, and ranged on each side of them a dozen waggons carrying steel reservoirs of compressed hydrogen which were at once connected with the balloons. Slowly these began to expand and soon revealed their sausage-like shape.

It was clear to me that their inflation would take some

time; and, as I was eager to see something from the neighbouring crest of the low ridge stretching to the eastward, on the commander of the company acquiescing, I walked smartly up to the crown of the saddleback.

Though the summits of the hilly region known as the Monts Faucilles rise to 1,200 feet above the sea, most of their valley bottoms are almost on the thousand feet level, so that the command of the hills over the neighbouring country is trifling, and the view limited. But from the point where I stood was a fairly wide aspect across the lower crests and through gaps in the wooded hills. A village lay close below me, deserted by most of its people; and an infantry battalion was now resting in its narrow streets. Through a near gap I could see with my glasses some of the big white-fronted hotels at Vittel; and, on the ridges beyond, the long flashes, against the dark background of the trees, showed that French quickfirers were engaging. But of the Germans I could see nothing, though the woolly puffs from shells frequently bursting over the Vittel saddleback showed they were replying. Then, the next second I sighted a token of their presence, a token that riveted my attention.

Away to the north-east in the direction of Mirecourt, over the woods there, were two blobs against the sky. I made out one of them to be the sausage-shaped German captive balloon, the *Drache*, flying-head to the wind on its long wire; I could just perceive the car hanging below it. The other object I at first thought was a second captive balloon, but, on again straining my eyes through the glasses, I could make out no wire; then I noticed that instead of the small car of the other balloon there was a long

platform below it. Observing more carefully I saw that it was moving. It was an air-ship.

Instantly I took to my heels, down to the farm, and told our commandant that the Germans had not only a captive but also a navigable air-ship.

"Thanks, a thousand thanks, for your information," said the commandant, "we know all about their air-ships, and have a little surprise for them. You are going to see something worth looking at, unless we blunder—very badly! In the good old-fashioned days we had to trust to the cavalry scouts for information. They drove in the enemy's cavalry screen, even then we could learn but little, and he also remained blind. Then, monsieur, the repeating rifle made reconnaissance still more difficult;—we drove in the cavalry, then we came on an advanced screen of chasseurs and found every foot of ground blocked.... Now we get above them and look down. But others can do the same; so if we are to keep them blind, we must have some way of disposing of their flying scouts; and keep our own in possession of the view. Just as in old times we tried to drive in the hostile cavalry, so now we must try to drive in their balloon corps."

"I thought the work of the balloon corps was reconnoitring not fighting," said I, as we moved towards the nearest airship.

"Ah! That is our secret," replied the commandant; "the world will hear of it soon, so I may let you know at once. Come on the platform of the air-ship. Let me give you a hand—so! Voici le grand secret!" and bending down at the fore end of the platform the officer pulled back a light tarpaulin.

Pivoted on a small mounting, with coiled springs

to take up the recoil, there was what looked like a short, large-bore gun mounted like a large fowling piece on a wooden stock, and so fixed that a man kneeling behind it could bring his shoulder to the butt. Glancing at the muzzle of the gun, I saw that its steel was no thicker than a rifle, and also perceived the ends of three shallow grooves.

"I confess," I said, "I don't like the idea of taking pot shots with a big rifle from such a shaky platform."

"Nor would I," answered the Frenchman, "if it were a case of a long shot with a big bullet or a shell. But here is the nice part of our idea."

He opened a flat box beside the gun. Four tubular projectiles of dull white metal lay neatly packed, just like scientific instruments in their case. Each was about a yard long, and three inches in diameter.

"That gun," he went on, "is practically a torpedo tube. These are our torpedoes." He took one from its bed in the case. "They are made of aluminium. . . . This cap on the point, here, is pulled off gently at the last moment and puts the fuse in action. One must load very carefully, for the fuze is fired once the torpedo is on the wing, through colliding with even a piece of silk, or a sheet of tissue paper. There is another cap on the base of the projectile. When that is withdrawn it bares a mass of rocket composition, which fills two-thirds of the tube, and in front of it is the high explosive charge. As the projectile is slipped into the gun, this ring half-way up it, is pushed off, and three wings, that slide into the grooves of the rifling, spring out when it leaves the gun, and keep the spin on the torpedo; as it flies like a rocket, the spin steadies it. It is no use firing bullets at a balloon, they let

the gas out too slowly ; but if this rocket torpedo hits, it blows the hostile balloon to pieces, and a hit lower down on the car wrecks all the machinery."

"Has it ever been tried ? How has the secret been kept ? No one has ever heard of it ! "

"Yes, we tried it two years ago, against a small captive balloon as the target, among the sandhills in the wilderness of the Landes, with all inquisitive folks kept at a distance. A glimpse must just have been got of the collapse of our target, for the papers had a story of a military balloon exploding."

"One more question," I said, "when you loose off the torpedo it is like throwing out some ballast, you go rushing up."

"We have provided for that. You see this wire running aft from the firing position. It works automatically a relief valve that liberates enough gas to compensate for the loss of weight. It is just possible that our friends, the Germans, have some trick ready for us, but I hardly expect it. If you leave the platform now, and go up the hill you will be able to watch the experiment. One of my lieutenants will command each airship; I shall be with you on the hill. We send up a small balloon, there, carrying a wire and terminal; then we can communicate wireless messages to the free-flying balloons."

The two airships, the *Condor* and the *Aigle*, were all ready, and the lieutenant and the three men of each crew were standing about at their posts. The men of the company had detached the gas tubes, and stood by the lines anchoring the long balloons. The commandant was exchanging telephone messages with the officer in the car of the captive. By now the thundering had gone on so long, and become so monotonous,

that I for one had got used to it. If it had stopped one would have felt surprised!

§ 5

The commandant left the telephone, spoke a few words to his lieutenants, and then mounted his horse, and gave me a steady trooper to ride.

As we made our way up to the slope I noticed that already from the crest of the ridge the small balloon was flying, about 300 feet aloft. It carried the wireless apparatus, the terminal of which was installed on a folding table at its base.

From the hill top I looked eagerly for the German balloons.

There was the captive still away to the north-east, and a second captive, sent up since I had first been on the hill, a long way to the south of it. The enemy's airship, I marked, had come a good deal nearer; it was moving slowly and steadily, and apparently steering for the captive French balloon down at the farm.

A captive attracts attention. It is so often sent up near the position occupied by a headquarters staff and general in command.

The commandant lit a cigar, offered me another, then stood silent with his eyes fixed on the hostile airship, and in his hand the receiver of the telephone with which his men had rapidly made connexion with his base at the farm.

I looked back at the farm. Every one there was at attention.

The enemy's balloon ship was now hovering 3,000 feet up in the air, above the bold spur that looks down

on Vittel from the north-east. It was actually over one of the French artillery positions. Its crew was collecting valuable information, perhaps sending it back by wireless messages. What was the commandant now waiting for?

Still he puffed silently at his cigar.

The hostile balloon now swung round a few degrees, altering its course, and began to move southward over the French positions, rising a little higher in the air. It was, as far as one could judge, over the valley road between Vittel and Ligneville.

Suddenly the commandant threw away his cigar, and put the telephone to his lips. I heard the message.

"*Condor*, attention! A German airship, five kilometres distant. Direction, north-east. Elevation, about 4,500 metres. Attack!"

As I looked upwards the *Condor* rose quickly, rushing vertically with her screw motionless. Presently I saw, as I stared at her now high overhead, that her great propeller began to spin round; it looked like a mass of dark haze behind the balloon. The *Condor* was heading straight for the enemy, and sweeping through the air at a speed that justified her name.

I turned my powerful glasses on the enemy. Distinctly could I see the four men of her crew. Three were busy with the machinery and the steering. The fourth was crouched down, as if facing the coming adversary.

"A surprise for them already!" said the commandant, turning to me for a moment, "I held on long enough to induce them to think we had only the captive. We have the speed of them. Yes, we shall bring them down in our own lines, even if they do run for it."

Just as he spoke the German turned, and made eastward. The crouching man had risen. He ran aft. I saw him standing above the propeller—and his attitude suggested he was taking aim with a fire-arm.

Suddenly the *Condor* threw out two long flapping wings, and more than ever justified her name.

"The German has put some bullets through her," grunted the commandant. "No matter! Dubard has his aeroplanes working, and can afford to lose a little gas." Then he raised the telephone again. "*Aigle*, attention! Follow the *Condor*."

One glance at the farm. The *Aigle* was rushing upwards into the air, and the men, relaxing for the moment the bonds of discipline, were running up the slope to see the aerial conflict.

The *Condor* seemed very near the Germans, although she must have been over 1,000 yards away.

Suddenly a jet of dark smoke gushed from her car, and like a ribbon of cloud bridged the space between her and her enemy; it was the trail of the rocket torpedo. It passed just above the hostile balloon, and continuing downwards in a long curve ended in the woods on a hill beyond Ligneville.

"Bad! bad!" muttered the commandant between his teeth.

The *Condor* jerked her head upward; she swayed unsteadily, but slackened speed. She steadied herself. Again the arching jet of smoke squirted from her platform.

There was a burst of white fire, a ring of yellowish vapour, in which for a moment the German airship disappeared. Then it came hurtling downwards, a mass of wreckage; and crashed into a clump of wood.

How the Frenchmen on the hill top cheered. They danced with excitement. As for myself I lost self-control, I threw up my helmet, and added a British hurrah to their shrill cries of "Vive la France! Vive le *Condor!* Vive Dubard!"

The bell of the wireless receiver on the table was shrilly ringing, and the operator bending over his instrument, his finger on the answering key. The commandant sprang to his side. We held our breath, and listened as the operator read out the message, slowly, word by word: "*Condor* much damaged by German bullets. Must descend without regaining station. Mécanicien Legrand killed by a bullet, and myself partly disabled."

"Signal back—'Approved. Well done.' Ring up Lieutenant Montdidier on the *Aigle*. He is to reconnoitre German positions, and destroy their captive balloons."

The commandant spoke very quietly, but he was obviously struggling to keep calm. He stood for a few moments, watching the *Condor* slowly descending near Ligneville and the *Aigle* now speeding eastward. Then he turned to the cheering men.

"Assez, mes enfants," he said, "we have done well, but it is only begun. Captain Maclou, fall in the detachment, and march with the company to Ligneville by the road to Dombrot, to succour the *Condor*. I will ride on in advance. Doubtless the Germans, if still alive, are already prisoners. Major Savill, you will come with me?"

I grasped his hand.

"Heartiest congratulations!" I cried.

The Frenchman's self-control broke down. Tears were in his eyes; I found myself hugged in his arms.

As we reached Ligneville we lost sight of the *Aigle*. But we soon had news of her. A lieutenant of our company had run the car which carried the wireless apparatus up to Ligneville, and had also brought in my motor. The little balloon with the wire and terminal was run up, and immediately the operator was able to get in touch with Montdidier's balloon.

The lieutenant was about to attack the captive balloon, and sent on the information he had collected while moving over the German front. The enemy was strongly massed in the sheltered hollows behind the hills, from Remoncourt on the railway to beyond Valfroicourt. A long column was crossing the line near Rozerotte, moving south, and another column in strength at least one division, closing in on Rancourt. All indications pointed to a concentration for a strong attack, south of the Mirecourt Vittel railway. Near the crossing of roads at Rozerotte there was a large staff, with a strong escort of white cuirassiers, too large a staff for a division or a corps ; the large standard displayed there, too, suggested that the Kaiser was in the neighbourhood.

The news was sent to headquarters.

A few minutes later there came another message, "Destroyed captive balloon near Rozerotte. One torpedo used. No casualties our side. Proceeding south to destroy other balloon."

"Success on success," exclaimed the delighted commandant. "We shall watch the German attack as it develops, and be ready to check it from whatever side it comes. To-morrow we shall have navigables up all along our front. We shall watch these fellows as the cat watches her mouse and they will see nothing beyond the nearest swell of the ground. They will

have no idea where we are massing for the attack till the storm bursts on them. It is splendid! They thought we were playing with toys when years ago we began to work with navigable balloons. Ah, French science is securing the victory for France! Nay, mon capitaine, the Freedom of Europe from the German Eagle!"

The *Condor*, not very seriously damaged, was found a mile south of Ligneville. Dubard, his right arm broken by a bullet was turned over to the doctors, after a comforting assurance that his exploit meant a mention in General Orders, the cross of the Legion of Honour and immediate promotion. The dead mechanic—his breast was riddled with three bullets—was placed on a stretcher, covered with a French flag, and borne to the church of the village.

In a wood, a little further on, a company of chasseurs had already discovered the wreck of the German balloon. Two of the crew, stunned by the fall, and one with a broken leg, had been made prisoners; one more lay dead among the wreckage and another with dangling limbs hung lifeless in the fork of a tree, —a ghastly sight!

The commandant ordered the bodies to be recovered, and laid beside that of the dead mechanic at Ligneville.

"They are brave men, who also have done their duty, mes enfants," said he to his men.

§ 6

It was now high noon. The artillery duel continued. The hint that had come of the Kaiser's presence in the front of this part of the French line suggested that before long here would be the scene of a special effort

of the enemy. But beyond the fact that both sides had reinforced their artillery, there had been no change since early morning. And, though the forces thus brought face to face far exceeded those of many an engagement, they after all formed but a minute portion of the great historic battle.

I often asked in vain what was happening twenty, thirty, forty miles away to the northward, or among those wooded hills to the south; but that was known only to the Commander-in-Chief, who was far away in the rear of the centre. There the trusted chief sat at a small table in a telegraph office, directing the battle which he could not see, which indeed was so far away that even its cannonading was a mere low murmur, heard at intervals when for a moment or two all was quiet in the room. The days were past when a commander rode in the thick of the fire, watching with his own eyes the varying fortunes of the struggle from flank to flank.

As I said to my French comrades, if the Kaiser was really so close to his advancing troops, it was only because his restless temperament urged him personally to share in the dangers of the day and to see at least some part of the battlefield with his own eyes. If it was true that he was with the numerous staff and the white cuirassiers at Rozerotte it meant too, thank heavens, that his impatience had placed him in a less favourable position for controlling the fortunes of the day.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE TUMULT OF BATTLE

AT Ligneville, where the innkeeper had remained at his house, his offer of a luncheon was welcome. The Commandant and I sat at a little table outside the auberge, hungrily ate his modest fare, and listened to the growing din of battle away to the eastward.

The conflict was heightening. A detachment of the ambulance corps had begun to instal a field hospital on the open space behind the inn, to clean outhouses, and lay down straw on their floors. At the cross road at the end of the village street, I could see endless batteries moving forward to strengthen the positions threatened by the German concentration :—huge guns, like fortress artillery, drawn by powerful traction engines; quick-firers with their long train of ammunition waggons, and machine guns, interminable, battery after battery! Infantry reinforcements were advancing by the fields; the road was left to the fighting material that had to be moved on wheels.

A message from General Harfield bade me rejoin him at Vittel where the headquarters of the Vosges Army would be that evening, but left me free to go meantime where I thought best. So leaving my car at Ligneville (for I feared that I would find all

the roads blocked), I rode forward up the high hill between Valleroy and Monthureux; and from that point I got my first near sight of the battle.

§ 1

Dismounting just behind the crest of the hill, in a small clump of wood, I watched the fight in something like safety. Shells were bursting on the slope below me, or screaming over the crest. Some of them had burst unpleasantly near as I rode up, but where I placed myself I was not likely to suffer any injury unless a shell took the exact crest where I stood.

Half-way down the slope I could look into the entrenched position of three batteries.

The guns and ammunition waggons stood close together; the steel shields on the guns and the armoured ammunition waggons formed a rampart for the gunners, who were further protected by the whole being sunk in the ground and the earth packed close up in front. The men, I noticed, wore close-fitting helmets of dark bronze supposed to be proof against shrapnel.

Their fire was being controlled by two officers with telescopes on the crest, not far from where I stood; and they were in telephonic communication with the batteries and other points along the range of hills; for this group of guns below me was but a unit in an array of artillery that extended by a hollow way running between the hills and the next slope to the northward.

On the reverse slope of this second hill I could see a battery of field howitzers, huge heavy squat guns, with their muzzles pointing skyward at an angle of nearly 45°. They were firing over the crest, and

also over their own artillery in front, at a target they could not see, taking their orders as to direction and elevation from fire-control officers placed on the east side of the hill.

The ground in front fell away rapidly, then it rose in minor undulations dotted with clumps of wood. I could see the infantry lying down on its slopes and under the shelter of the woods, with the shell fire of the opposing artilleries whizzing high overhead; they were evidently the reserves holding the broken ground out of sight beyond the lower crests. Without doubt they were engaging the German infantry; but the roar of the near artillery wholly overwhelmed the rattle of the rifle firing.

However, on the higher ground towards Valfroicourt, one could see the bright flashes of the hostile artillery even in the sunlight. And far away, a small spot in the azure sky, sailed the *Aigle* triumphantly.

I remembered the sight of our six or twelve mountain guns bombarding the fortified village of a hill tribe or the stone sangars along the slope of a frontier pass! What infantile play our operations on the North-West Frontier now seemed compared with this struggle, with its miles and miles of guns.

I was on part of the main artillery position, where parks of the most powerful field batteries in the world were massed against each other. I wondered how such a fire could be maintained not for a day but for a few hours; and yet, there were the gunners, methodically loading and firing, without haste, without rest, but still at a rate that meant that hundreds of tons of projectiles were being hurled through the air, each hour . . . . And then I realized, as I never had before, how far-reaching is the effect of modern war.

For to keep those guns fed with missiles tens of thousands of men had to be working, had to be working night and day, in that long valley packed with machines, and lighted at night with the vast flames of its blast furnaces, the valley at Le Creusot; and in arsenal and foundry and armament works all over France.

Northwards towards the railway I could see more French infantry moving forward by the Valfroicourt road, which here was sheltered by the hills to the front; and from the road, a battery was pushing out into the fields, and up the sheltering slope to give closer support to the defending infantry. Mounting my horse, I worked under cover to the lower heights beyond which the infantry battle was in progress. The broken ground here gave me plenty of shelter.

The French had literally dug themselves into the hillsides. Every slope was furrowed with winding tiers of trenches and innumerable gunpits. On the higher parts of the slopes where the crest gave some shelter, and also behind the clumps of wood, field-pieces were hidden away—here one, there two or three. From every trench some of the men were firing, while others, bending down or kneeling, were toiling with their short entrenching tools, continually improving their cover. Here and there in front, with the glass I just managed to catch a glimpse of the enemy's firing line. There, too, the men were digging themselves into shelter.

There was a sound in the air like that the wind makes on a stormy night among the great trunk lines of telegraph wires, and through this humming of the flying bullets came the moaning of heavy shells, the sharp explosions of shrapnel bursting in the air,

and the rattle and thud of the showers of balls scattered by them as they exploded.

One's first impression was that nothing could live under such a fire. But there were few signs of damage. Away to the left, the stacks and buildings of a farm were ablaze. Just in front of my lookout two men were stretched on the unbroken ground in rear of the trench; through my glass, I could see the white, collapsed features of dead men laid there after being drawn out of the trench by their comrades. A little to my right, in the shelter of a bank, a surgeon in his shirt-sleeves was binding up the arm of a man who sat on the ground beside him; an orderly with a box open near him on the ground stood at attention beside Sawbones; a little further, a couple of men were plodding along, with a shattered gory thing on a stretcher.

§ 2

On turning back to the sheltered side of the hill, I found a battalion in reserve, lying at ease on the short grass. Some of the men were smoking, others eating, others asleep, a few playing cards together quietly, while the company officers sat in groups among their men. In one of these groups I saw the chef-de-bataillon; and on introducing myself to him learned that the two other battalions of the regiment were in the trenches in front.

They had lost very few men. The German artillery fire had been heavier earlier in the day, but now the French gunners seemed to be getting the better of them. The collapse of the enemy's balloons had been seen by the men, who were greatly encouraged by the sight.

On all the near roads infantry were now marching, and down the space left open in the middle moved a long train of empty waggons of ammunition retiring to refill, and also the Red Cross waggons conveying casualties to the rear. Trotting and cantering through the fields, then, alongside the road, and extricating myself with difficulty from a block in the crowded street of Valleroy, I turned to the left to reach Ligneville by the back of the hills that formed the main artillery position.

Outside the village, a large open shed had been cleared out, and under its roof an ambulance had been installed. Men lay on stretchers or on trusses of straw, awaiting their turn on the two tables also placed in shelter of the shed. At one, the surgeons were engaged in anaesthetizing a patient ; at the other, a hasty operation was in progress. An operator held down a mask on the patient's face with one hand, and kept the other on his pulse. The other, with his sleeves rolled up, and smears of blood all over his hands and arms, was hacking out a serrated shell splinter. It was easy to see from the ghastly wounds, flaying flesh and cartilage, that the wounded men were gunners.

At Ligneville I handed over my horse to my friends of the balloon detachment. Their waggons were parked outside the village ; and on the road was another company of engineers with a curious collection of waggons and apparatus—dynamos driven by oil engines, great drums of electric cables and search-lights, as large as those of a first-class battleship, mounted on motor cars. As soon as darkness came they were to be placed on the hill tops along the front to reveal the movements of the enemy.

From Ligneville to Vittel the journey was easy

enough. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Vosges had installed his headquarters at the great hotel in the park, one of the largest in Europe. And to find that during the day Headquarters had moved forward twelve miles, from Lamarche to Vittel, seemed to me to be an augury of success.

The field telegraph had been run up to the hotel. In the casino, where in the season tourists might have gathered round the little marble tables to take their after dinner coffee and listen to the band, a score of military typists had installed their machines, and were rattling off orders and despatches dictated by officers of the staff. Orderly cyclists on motor cycles or in powerful racing cars, together with horsemen, waited beside the hotel terrace. The tricolour and lantern indicating headquarters hung over the grand entrance.

Earlier in the day some shells had fallen in the park, and one had damaged the façade of the hotel, but now the place was just out of the region of distant fire, and the crowd of staff officers were congratulating themselves on finding such splendid quarters. Two of the other hotels were being rapidly prepared as hospitals. Down at the railway station trains of ammunition were being rapidly unloaded, and the sappers were busy laying additional sidings. From a line of ambulance waggons wounded men were being carefully transferred to a hospital train.

To me it came that fighting is but a kind of far-reaching organism. It seemed to form the outer brink, acute, menacing, of a world wherein all was feverish, organized activity, wherein thousands were toiling to keep the battle line in existence; supply it with ammunition, food, and men and rifles to fill

the gaps, and men and great cannon to strengthen it; and at the same time men to clear away the human wreckage. And here it was that the picked of the trained minds of France—not soldiers only but scientific specialists of all kinds—were working to direct the colossal human machinery and all its innumerable parts.

If all this unselfish, untiring energy, all this whole-hearted devotion of body and mind and life itself, were thrown into the great works of peace, ah! what a different world it would be!

§ 3

Till the sun went down the cannon roared from the hills. Then as the twilight deepened it gradually died away.

Looking eastward I now saw the white glare of a hundred searchlights and saw the red glimmer of countless bivouac fires reflected in the evening sky. Lucky were those of us allowed to sleep, wrapped in blanket or overcoat and stretched where we had stood; but there were many more, and many who could not sleep, who took their last look on the star-lit heavens. The noise of the shunting trains came continually from the station, waggons rumbled through the village street, ambulances were being unloaded at the improvised hospitals, in the casino the typewriters clicked; round the telegraph office, by the light of an improvised electric installation, staff offcers handed in despatches—and tired correspondents passed in their messages, begging that they might be got on the wires as soon as might be.

The world must know how the airships had fought,

and how the French had held the Germans at bay with the Kaiser looking on.

Harfield and I exchanged a few words with the chief of the staff before going to bed. The news was good. Everywhere was France holding her own along the frontier. To-morrow it was hoped we would assume the offensive, and press in upon the German front now along the Faucilles hills. At the same time a fierce essay was to be made to cut in upon the enemy's lines of retreat, by breaking through their right from the screen of barrier forts north of Toul. Here, the Army of Lorraine was massed ready for the attack.

At headquarters, then, there was much restrained jubilation. Not yet had we got the calamitous tidings from home. Not yet did we Englishmen know that the gloomy prognostications of generations of British strategists had at last been fulfilled.

CHAPTER V

DIE MILLIONENSCHLACHT

I MUST have fallen almost immediately into a deep dreamless sleep lasting for over four hours. Suddenly I awoke with a jerk; the room was bright with a flash of lightning, and a peal of thunder seemed to shake the building. I sprang up and went to the window.

Through the rain and darkness could be seen the searchlights on the hills, streaming in enormous white wedges across the sky, to become dimmed for a moment as another jagged streak of lightning flashed across them. Nowhere was there any firing; it was just as if the tens of thousands of troops were thinking only of their own misery as they lay bivouacked under the pelting storm. From the station there still came the sound of trains shunting, and the heavily laden tumbrels of the ammunition columns continued to rumble through the village street.

It was 2 a.m. and, I judged, hardly worth while trying to sleep again, so I dressed, and went down to the large dining-room where I found many of the staff officers, correspondents, and all the crowd attached to headquarters grouping themselves about the tables for their hasty breakfast. Outside, the thunder still pealed in the distance, and the rain came in heavy bursts, shivering loud against the tall windows.

I found Harfield here, and was told my day's work would be to watch the development of the fight on the right centre—the very ground I had explored the day before. Just before we left came word of the Hollanders' brilliant night attack on the enemy at Zalt Boemel. The Dutch yet possess all their old tenacity.

§ 1

Under the drizzling rain and in the vague half light of early morning the long procession of officers and escort wound down to the high road and took the direction of Haréville.

The motor cars conveying staff officers with orders, and the chief of the staff on a tour of inspection, left the main road and rushed away in various directions. Other service automobiles followed the cavalcade, amongst them a telegraph waggon reeling out its cable line by the side of the road, where the rubber-protected wires slipped safely into the ditch. Headquarters was to be temporarily near Haréville, and this cable linked the staff with the network of telegraphs starting from Vittel, up to which point the permanent wires had been kept in working order.

At Haréville the staff moved up the bold height that looks down on the woods and the village from the northward; but I rode southward under the dripping trees of a narrow avenue leading through the woods.

There was enough daylight now for the gunners to get to work; and the heavy reports of the artillery were now coming more and more frequently from the front, and rising gradually into the steady roll of a sustained cannonading.

Beyond the village of Valleroy, I reached the fight-

ing line of yesterday, and for my first observation post selected a sheltered nook among some banks of earth near by a lane that wound over the hill top. It was evident that during the night our defence had been strengthened.

Working parties had deepened the trenches, and cut gullies to clear away the rain; and there were more guns in position—quickfirers in couples, banked up with heavy mounds of earth and ambushed with branches and small trees. The quickfirers were throwing showers of shells into the ground to the front, the elevation of the pieces being changed from time to time so as to strew now one belt of ground, now another, with bursting projectiles. On the reverse slope of the hill huge howitzers, posted there to fire over it, squatted on platforms of fir logs, with their muzzles pointing skyward; they were waiting till a good store of ammunition was accumulated in the earth-protected magazines between them. Behind them a little narrow gauge line, its toy trucks pushed by hand, was bringing up their projectiles. Lower down the slope, infantry packed in the trenches were firing heavily at some objective that I could not distinguish.

Two miles away, the hilltops flickered with the flashes of the German artillery, and their shells were bursting freely in the air and on the ground, but doing less damage than one would have expected, for the French had laboriously dug themselves into safe cover. It looked as if things had come to a deadlock, as this link in the long chain of our positions could not be forced easily; but who could say what was passing elsewhere? Each in his own narrow field of action had to trust blindly to his unseen chief, and his comrades leagues away.

But I saw what to me seemed an augury of victory, and without any doubt many thousands of the French soldiery thought the same. High in air, like grey spots dull against the dull sky, three of the French airships were speeding up into the north. Every one knew that above the battlefield France now held unchallenged possession of the air; and this meant full and secure knowledge of the enemy's movements. The latter must needs strike his blows more or less at random now!

Throughout the early morning there was little or no change in the gigantic conflict, and the steady exchange of fire became very monotonous. Along a road in a hollow to the left Red Cross waggons passed and repassed—stretcher bearers came and went in endless procession. The gunners suffered little. Once I saw a shell crash full on a gun shield, burst as it crumpled up the steel plate and destroyed the gun crew; the wrecked shield was detached and thrown aside, the dead were laid behind the gunpit; the wounded carried off, and speedily the gun was in action again. In front the stacks of a farm and the thatched roofs of a village had burst into flame; and the smoke drifting slowly down the wet wind hid a mile or so of the German position. Convoys of small arm ammunition, carried on horses with pack saddles, made their way to the front. Regiments dribbled forward, a squad or a company at a time, working under cover of the slopes or in the hollow ways.

§ 2

Between 8 and 9 a.m. I realized that our fire in front was slackening fast—some of the quickfirers

nearer me were firing at a much slower rate and others were actually silent; yet the gun crews had not suffered. Squatted behind their guns, they were smoking or eating from their haversacks, and some, stretched on the damp ground, seemed to be sleeping. "Ammunition supply running short," thought I; "the wonder is they've kept it up so long."

The heavy howitzers sheltered behind the slope had as yet not fired a single shot. But General Duhesme, the divisional commander, a stout, heavily built little man, with a row of medals and stars on his jacket, had just ridden up with four officers of his staff, and was now talking to the commander of the heavy artillery.

After a few minutes' conversation he rode up to the crest near me, acknowledged my salute, and remained still coolly sweeping the distance with his field glass—horse and man a distinct figure on the sky line. Then he courteously asked me to accompany him; and together we rode down the reverse slope of the hill, rounded its shoulder, and cantered into the shelter of a group of farm buildings by the Valfroicourt road. A cable by the roadside ran into a shed where the telegraphists had installed their instruments.

"You have noticed our fire is slackening?" said the General. "It is as ordered. I want to draw the attack. We are strong enough to hold them, and the sooner they come on the better. They have no means of seeing into our position, and as our fire is dying down they will think we are hard hit and running short of ammunition. As a matter of fact we have suffered very little and are quite ready for them."

From the north one of the balloon ships still high in air came rapidly towards the farm, then poised above

it. At the telegraph waggon a little balloon carrying the receiving terminal was run up some five hundred feet, and from the air messages began to arrive. Yes, the Germans were pressing forward to the attack.

Ten o'clock, the crisis must be near. The minutes seemed to drag. Would it never come ?

Duhesme sent off messages by his gallopers, then he dismounted, lit a cigar and leaning against the wall of the telegraph shed dictated a message in a low tone. It was pleasing to see his self-possessed confidence.

But war has become so unpicturesque—commonplace ! A divisional general of the old wars would have been galloping along his line, in the midst of the fire, encouraging his men ; and yet here is Duhesme sheltered by a mass of buildings, puffing at his cigar, and sending off a communication just like any business man arranging a bargain.

Yet, war is war still. A hundred yards away Red Cross waggons were heavily rumbling along back to the rear.

Of a sudden the French fire leapt into a volcanic outburst of sound. From the front rang the sharp angry crackling of thousands of rifles—nearer the harsh earsplitting reports of the quickfirers—and now from the hill arose the deep roaring of the howitzers.

" They are hard at it," said one of the staff officers. But no one moved.

Duhesme continued dictating ; then he stopped for a minute to read a message handed him by the wireless operator.

" Enemy attacking two divisions in massed columns on the line. Valfroicourt to Remoncourt station," he read aloud. " The advance well under fire. Melin-

ite shells bursting well among them. None of the attack nearer our line than 300 metres."

I could not see the ground referred to, but northward, beyond the railway, I marked line after line of Germans pushing up towards the Haréville heights and batteries of artillery galloping down to give them near support. A second advance it was, prolonging the attack northward.

"With your permission, General, I ride to the front?"

"No," said Duhesme, "no. A little patience, m'sieur! We all go together."

Oh, it was hard to wait. I riveted my gaze on the northern attack. It had stopped. The men in front were lying down and firing. Some of the guns had unlimbered. But with my glass I could see the shells of the French artillery bursting among the crowds huddled on the slopes, and enveloping the hostile batteries in a dusky tornado of smoke and fire. The Germans had been lured to destruction.

And on the ground that I could not see, it would be the same.

A movement close at hand diverted my attention from the fight;—one of the staff was galloping back over the hill, and Duhesme had mounted. Another officer was on the road, waving aside the ambulance waggons and stretcher parties; and then along the avenue of trees from the rear came a regiment at the double. Their knapsacks, blankets and all overweight had been left behind; and they were now dashing along, rifles sloped and bayonets fixed. Duhesme, followed by myself and a couple of his gallopers, rode on the grass to the right of the road and kept abreast of the leading company. The men hailed his appearance with a ringing cheer.

He took off his gold-laced kepi, and waved it.

"En avant, mes enfants," he called out.

Right and left shells burst, aimed hurriedly and wide of the mark by a battery on the far-off German position. I rose in my stirrups and looked forward.

In front lay an amphitheatre of sloping ground, here yellow with standing corn, there dotted with clumps of trees. On the lower slopes the enemy's lines, though swept by rifle fire and shells from the French position, were now within two hundred yards of the French advanced trenches. They struggled to draw nearer; but they had reached the limit where the weight of fire barred further advance.

The slopes descending to the trenches from our gun position were dark with men racing forward, some in formed bodies, others in scattered straggling lines just like skirmishers. Shells were bursting thickly among them. To this sudden advance of the supports whole battalions were moving forward, bugles blowing, drums beating—the reserves called up to carry forward the French counter attack. Before these had reached the trench the men who held it had risen, fired point blank in the faces of the enemy, and charged them, supported by their comrades.

Then I could no longer grasp the picture as a whole. I saw only what was close to me.

§ 3

Duhesme had halted, and had signalled to a line battalion and a battalion of blue-coated chasseurs to stand fast as a possible reserve. They were just on the trench, now empty of all but the dead who dotted it here and there, looking like huddled heaps of clothes;

a row of knapsacks was piled along the front of it; and the hollow was bright with heaps of brass cartridges, thousands of them, jerked out of the rifles as the men had reloaded. Beyond the trench, a dense, heavy mass of men were pushing forward, bayonets in air: they were literally pushing the Germans back. On both sides the guns had ceased to fire on the infantry, and were exchanging shells across the valley.

Then suddenly there came a great cheering.

The long thick line of French infantry surged forward with indomitable verve and impetus. The Germans had broken.

Duhesme with a wave of his hand set his two battalions in motion, and rode leisurely forward. His two gallopers dashed off right and left, calling to the company commanders to get their men together for a more ordered advance, and bugles rang out.

Here and there rifle fire spluttered out in front, but I could plainly see the ground where the fight had raged. Everywhere lay dead and wounded men; some in little heaps, some in contorted postures, many of them with their arms still rigid in self-defence; most of them were Germans killed, not in the actual bayonet fight, but by the hell of shell fire that had stopped the onset. There were craters in the ground, torn up by the bursting 20-inch howitzer shells; and, ah, the dead faces there, many pulped, many blotched with blood and turned a dirty yellow-green by the acid fumes. A wounded horse was trying to rise, and falling back exhausted; another, disembowelled, lay in a great puddle of blood. At another time I would have been sickened, but now looked at it all with that hardened eye which comes to men in furious hostilities.

Back through the press marched a little column of

disarmed prisoners, some of them wounded. Order was coming out of chaos; we were breaking into a long firing line; battalions arriving from the rear were lying down in the trenches, and companies reformed behind folds of the ground. In front the fire was breaking out afresh. Some of the enemy were lying down and replying, others were retiring, some were actually running. The enemy's artillery was covering the retirement; and we were taking cover, and getting a grip on the ground we had won.

I had half expected to see the pursuit pushed to the slopes beyond where the hostile artillery was in action. But I now saw why Duhesme had halted.

He was swinging a whole brigade round, firing line and supports, and launching a new counter attack against the flank of the German division that was attacking north to the railway. The German gunners were shelling this new advance; but every French gun that could be brought to bear poured its fire on the crest where the hostile artillery was in action.

I now became reckless of danger, and rode away after our attacking brigade. They were lining the railway, and pouring their fire into the flank of the enemy's attack; and I saw, too, that here also the enemy were retreating to the hills, slowly and doggedly, firing as they went. Away to the north—right and left of the mass of black smoke that marked a burning village—our troops were moving forward in pursuit.

"Look, look!" said a linesman, close to me; and he pointed excitedly to a clump of wood on the long slope at the end of which rose the church tower of Remoncourt.

Out from the screen of the wood streamed the leading squadrons of a cavalry brigade, with levelled lances

in the front—German heavy cavalry, rank upon rank, line upon line of them.

The French halted; and under their withering fire the front line of the cavalry literally seemed to break to pieces. Men and horses fell—riderless chargers drove forward; but through the débris the second line bore down, and crashed into us and through us. A third line swerving to the right broke in with equal success.

I saw men jumping aside or throwing themselves on the ground; but others held together in groups bristling with bayonets. And now the victorious horsemen had to pay for their success.

From our supports a deadly fire belched out upon them, and at such a moment friend and foe fall together. The German trumpets rang out the retire. The cavalry streamed back in broken disorder into the shelter of the woods, leaving behind them a scattered trail of killed and wounded comrades shot down by the pursuing fire. But they had done their work. They had checked our onset and disengaged their own attacking infantry.

There came a lull in the storm. The artillery was hard at it, but the infantry fire had everywhere died down.

I dismounted, and looked at my watch; the struggle had lasted less than half an hour. I took my field glass from its case. A lot of broken glass clattered out, for both objective glasses and part of the frame had been shattered by a bullet; I had not noticed it in the excitement of the fight. There was blood on my horse's neck. I turned the mane back, and saw that in two places there were the deep red scores of grazing bullets. The poor beast seemed unconscious

of the hurt, but I knew that slight as it was it might mean the animal would be knocked out before evening. If I could join the general staff of the corps I might get a remount, and in any case could have the horse's injuries attended to; so I rode along the railway, through a sheltered cutting and up the back of the hill above Haréville.

§ 4

As may be imagined I was rather excited, and eager for news, so I was glad to find the staff at Haréville, and better still to meet Harfield.

"So you've been in the thick of it, have you," said the General; "you needn't get killed just yet! But it was a fight worth seeing," he went on. "It is only an incident, though, mark you, when I was young we'd have called it a very big battle!"

"How is the fight going?" I asked.

"Well, I know a little," answered the General, unfolding his map, "See here, on the German left the Army of the Jura is making good progress—they are well across the Epinal railway. . . . We know for a fact, the Kaiser is very anxious. The balloon scouts saw his big staff and escort away in front of us, early this morning, but since then he has gone eastward to look after his flank. Now, several attacks have been repulsed along our centre, and we have got in some counter attacks. Away northward, our left, the Army of Lorraine is pushing on, but not as quickly as depended on; however the pressure is telling on the enemy. We know he had been unable to reinforce his centre—he has even had to send away some of the central reserve to meet the Jura men. . . . He is weak

here, in our front, and his big attack is a failure; so I rather expect we shall see a dash made late to-day for those heights opposite us, behind Remoncourt. We may be on Madon to-night; and to-morrow may see the Moselle with the German centre broken. The Kaiser has played a neck-or-nothing game. . . . It looks as if he is short of men and in rather an awkward position."

"Short of men, sir? The reports were that—after detaching two corps for Holland, and keeping sufficient strength in reserve for observation, north and east, there are at least sixteen corps in the first line for France. Then they have the landwehr."

"All very fine on paper!" was Harfield's reply, shrugging his shoulders. "But they are nearly all under strength. Just now the chief of the staff showed me some startling intelligence that reached him two hours ago. Not one unit, not one corps except the guards has got all its reserves; the Social Democrats have blocked them. Their labour leaders say they'll fight in defence of the Fatherland, but not to kill their brother workers in Holland and France. . . . Hardly a corps but has had to leave units at home to keep order. Strikes everywhere. And the landwehr are coming in very badly. They declare they are the 'home guard,' and 'll fight for their native soil, but decline to cross the Rhine.

". . . Yes, as you say. . . . A big victory for Germany might stop it all and inflame the war fever—nothing succeeds like success. But as far as I can see, short of a big victory, there is no help for the Kaiser. He is simply between the devil and the deep sea! . . . His own doing too!"

And now we understand why the enemy had hurled himself upon the fortress screen of the frontier, and with-

out waiting to secure his flanks dashed so recklessly for the gap between Epinal and Toul. The unexpected had happened. The heart of Germany was not in this war of aggression; but our Ally, she was moving as one man to defeat the unprovoked attack.

And ourselves! What was Britain doing? Had our naval forces encountered the enemy on the waters we used to claim as our own?

"Any word from home, sir?" I asked Harfield as we parted—I to get something to eat. "It is odd we have had no news!"

"I have had no communications as yet," he replied slowly. "True, the wires, and 'wireless' too, are blocked with Government and the General Staff's work. Press men can't get theirs away, I'm told. Yet, as you say, it is odd. . . . We seem neglected—every one too busy at home to remember us, Savill. Let us hope the navy is pulling us through at home. Ah, if only, if only, we had France's military initiative and a tenth of her military power and efficiency!"

It was not ours to know that at this minute that was the very prayer ascending from the great pacific heart of our country: England stricken, appalled at the horrors of that overseas raiding, the possibilities of which her governing powers had questioned so long, so blandly—and so blindly, too.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEMORY OF SEDAN

THE headquarters of the Army of the Vosges was temporarily established on the reverse slope of the hill; I found that two tents, rare things in this campaign of cantonments, and open-air bivouacs, had been pitched and a staff of clerks were writing at tables improvised out of trestles and deal boards. The rain had ceased, the sun shone brightly, and the hill top commanded an extensive view; but the real point of observation was the airship, cruising slowly up and down well to the front of and almost over the German position. To mislead the enemy as to the position of headquarters, a captive balloon with an ostentatiously displayed tricolour and a dummy figure in its car was anchored over an unoccupied hilltop a mile and a half away to the left.

In the sheltered hollow behind the hill there was a crowd of officers, orderlies and press correspondents. Seated at a folding table near the staff tents the good-humoured censor, a much travelled man of many languages and infinite patience, was steadily working his way through a pile of press messages, that accumulated more rapidly than ever any 'open' wires could have dealt with them.

§ I

All that afternoon I watched the development of the attack, and the gradual ascendency of our artillery fire over that of the Germans; the slow advance of the infantry working cautiously forward in every fold of the ground; and the cunning massing of the supports behind every sheltered ridge. Late in the afternoon, I could see, with the telescope, the shells of the Jura army batteries bursting high over the hills to the south-eastward; and a member of the staff informed me that reports spoke of the steadily increasing pressure of this flank advance upon the Kaiser's left. From the airships came intelligence that troops, originally posted behind the German centre, were now to be seen marching by every road to the southward.

The sun was low when the rapid advance of our lines in the wide undulating valley traversed by the railway showed that at last the attack was to be pressed home upon the Remoncourt heights. I felt I must see it all more closely, so rode down, through the smouldering ruins of Neuveville, and passed through two lines of advancing supports and pushed for a poplar-lined road, along a raised bank that stood nearly parallel to the low range of tree-dotted hills.

In a gap there I saw the village of Remoncourt, with the red-black-and-white flag of Germany displayed on its church tower. The German fire had so dwindled in the last hour that my ride forward, though not without some dangers, could not be termed a rash venture. Half a mile from the road, I dismounted and approached the extreme front on foot.

The firing line was no scattered chain of skirmishers but a dense array. It had halted, crouching behind

the low embankment formed by the road and its double row of poplars, to gather strength for the final attack. The levelled rifles poured forth a steady stream of fire; there was a crackling din, a thin riband of flashes gleaming among the tree trunks. Like a thick hailstorm the bullets swept down the slope where the Germans waited in the shelter of their trenches. And yet more terrible than the bullets there beat on them the hurricane of shells from our quickfirers, a mile of belching gun muzzles up on the hills 3,000 yards away. They burst in white rings of smoke, sending downward and onward the jets of deadly bullets that spattered over the trenches; or, striking the ground, exploded into geysers of fire and smoke, splinters of steel and jets of earth and stones. I marked that sometimes a stray shell would crash into a tree by the road, sending down a mass of shattered branches, and killing or maiming some of the Frenchmen below.

Our gunners on the far hillside, now all but untroubled by a return fire, were working as if on parade; they shot coolly—deliberately—as if at target practice.

The German fire was, indeed, not crushed or silenced, but under the dense sleet of bullet and shell it had become demoralized and rendered half useless. Men now shot wildly and blindly over the front of the first trench into the haze of dust and battle smoke, incessantly they were being mown down by the tremendous fire. Brave troops they were, and resolute in facing death; they clung to their trenches; they still fired; but—there is a limit to physical endurance!

The enemy could not only see that our advance was unchecked; but the feeling must have assailed them that it was inevitable. Indeed the tremendous weight of the attack seemed to bear everything down.

In front of them, dimly seen through the haze, wave after wave of dull-coated soldiery was rapidly surging towards the road. The immense mass of them made an easy target; and the defenders of the trench kept up an intense fire; I could hear the storm of bullets spit against the bank.

Suddenly I saw the climax nearing.

Along the battle-line of road the troops in cover had sprung to their feet. Bugle and drum pealed out—it was the stirring music of the 'Marseillaise.' The next instant came a sudden lull of the artillery on the hills, and then like one solid body over the bank burst the enormous volume of men, launched with fixed bayonet for the fight hand-to-hand.

The enemy leapt up in their entrenchments, and fired as fast as fingers could work bolt and trigger; and supports raced forward in reinforcement of their decimated front.

The attack had to cross four hundred yards of open ground. Three minutes of danger and death. But it was not that same danger and death which had had to be faced earlier in the day when the defence was still fresh, confident, eager, and with nerve and limb unwearied; and I saw that no loss or danger could stop that rush. The Frenchmen's fighting instinct had proved itself. They gripped the certainty of victory in iron hands.

These charging troops had well nigh lost all sense of danger; and each man of them gathered excitement from his fellow. The swords of their leaders, the flags they adored, waved them onward. Men dropped in bloody heaps—their comrades dashed over them. Even had those in front hesitated the moving mass behind would have flung them down, and trampled

over them. The danger was not in moving forward but in holding back.

Up the slope went that enormous wave of glittering steel. Of the thousands in the charge, I think, few really fought. They had but to press forward, each adding his weight of intense energy to the moving mass.

For a brief instant the attack and the defence met face to face—entangled together—with bayonets crossed or buried in flesh. As they became locked, the weight behind bore all before it, over the trench; and those who lost their footing, or tried to resist to the last, were trampled down or stabbed.

The German line was overwhelmed.

It all was a horrible nightmare of strife, in which blind instinctive action had usurped thought and any directed effort. . . .

§ 2

In the hollow to my right the crackle of rifle fire told me that the village of Remoncourt was still being hotly contested. To the left a German firing line was falling back before our advance, and from a hill to the left front a couple of batteries had come into action to cover the retirement. The victors on the plateau were disordered by their own success; companies were hastily getting into order for a further advance. And fresh troops came doubling from the rear, and batteries rushed up with a cracking of whips and a rattle of harness.

The collapse of the enemy's resistance plainly s
that only a weak rearguard had met the shoc

the pressure of the Army of the Jura on the Kaiser's flank had forced his retreat; and now we pressed on the retiring enemy fast. There was not much of daylight left, but while it lasted we pushed boldly forward. The ground eastwards towards the Madon and Meuse lent itself to feints in rearguard tactics, but feints were useless against an attack directed with the help of the aeronauts. They, I afterwards heard, had sent down the intelligence that the only German force to resist the advance was a screen of troops that would have to give way if boldly attacked.

On went our advance over the low hills. Only once was it seriously checked. A brigade of white cuirassiers swept out from behind the shoulder of the hill, rode over our leading companies, broke into separate masses—here a couple of squadrons, there a troop;—rode at everything that stood against them; and then retired leaving a mile of ground strewn with its own red casualties and the killed and maimed horses. I was caught in the rush and thrown on my side, unwounded but stunned by a violent fall.

The charge of the cuirassiers, a 'death ride' like Bredow's charge at Rezonville, had been made to gain a respite for the retirement across the Madon river. As we rapidly pushed on again, now meeting with hardly a show of resistance, we heard the explosions of the mines as the German engineers blew up the bridges.

The night fell quickly, for the sky was black with clouds, and a heavy rain began to come steadily down. Gradually the cannonade which had been rising to a steady roar away to the right front died into silence. The battle was over for a time at least. Darkness and weariness had stopped the main advance.

I had become a unit in a column of men that plodded

onward for awhile. The officers, as a sub-lieutenant grunted out to me, were looking for some kind of shelter, and as the darkness deepened a halt was called at the abandoned village of Hymont where the Saule brook runs into the Madon.

§ 3

The rain had now become a steady downpour. The fields were turning into morasses, and down every hollow of the hills a muddy stream poured to the river, and it was rapidly rising over its low banks. To light a fire anywhere in the open was impossible; the damp wood only smoked and smouldered. Many of the tired troops threw themselves down, regardless of the sodden ground and the deluge that soaked through overcoat and blanket, while others huddled themselves together in crowds, or walked up and down. We had little to eat, a bit of bread or a biscuit; and only a vague idea as to when we would be supplied again. Even the village could give nothing but the scanty shelter of its roofs, for at the approach of the invaders the inhabitants had fled, driving their cattle before them, and the enemy had eaten up all that they left behind.

There were crowds of men in the streets, crowds in every house, lights in the cottage windows, and the flicker of fires promising some comfort; but men thronged at the doors unable to find a place inside, and I hesitated to raise any special claim as an officer and a guest, for to do so would have been to displace some one.

Order and discipline were relaxed, yet there was no trouble. The men were weary, wet, hungry and

comfortless, but they were cheerfully waiting for the morning; perhaps we then might have sun, possibly better weather, perhaps food, certainly orders. I noticed that at least two different regimental numbers were represented in the groups of my comrades. And if this was the fate of the victors, what must be the condition of the defeated army thrust back amid storm and darkness to the crossings of the Moselle.

I turned down to the little river. There was a railway line on the other bank, and a train came puffing slowly along it from the southward, the huge electric headlight on the engine throwing a long ray of light in front of it. Round the bend it went, to the river bank below the village. Before it had actually stopped, several great flaring lights broke out, one on every waggon; and I could see it was a breakdown train arrived to repair the broken railway bridge at the bend of the line, the blowing up of which in the enemy's retreat had severed railway communications between Vittel, Epinal and Mirecourt, and broken up the whole system of frontier railways.

I walked along my side of the little river towards the bridge, where a row of buzzing "Wells" lights were now turning even the dense darkness of the rainy night into murky day.

To me this ordered activity meant much. Even in the chaos of victory the staff was at work, shaping a new order of things. Already the destruction of this important link in the recaptured network of frontier communications had been reported to headquarters; and the emergency train of one of the railway battalions of engineers, ordered up from the rear, had picked its way through the night to the place where it was wanted. I had observed one of these trains at Langres,

with its store of tools, its spare rails, sleepers, the supply of explosive for clearing away wreckage, the steel trestles and girders, that could be fitted together as a bridge span with a few bolts and nuts as easily as one puts together an iron bedstead—and finally the powerful crane for lifting everything into place. By morning the Saule would be bridged again.

§ 4

It now occurred to me that instead of walking about Hymont in the dark or watching the engineers at work on the bridge it would be better to push on to Mirecourt. So I started on the walk of three or four miles to that town.

I was challenged by a post at the north entrance of Hymont, and showed my pass. It was a sign that order still existed in the midst of disorder. A little further on, at the railway station, I was again challenged. The sheds and buildings were lighted up ; and stretcher parties were bringing in wounded men, for there had been fighting close by late in the day and the ground was not yet cleared. Beyond, between the railway and the river, and on both sides of the road, was one crowded, fireless bivouac ; but yet, I marked that one regiment was lying under the rain in well-ordered lines, with arms piled, and here and there lanterns burning, and sentries posted. They had a post on the road, and when I came to it I found they belonged to one of the chasseur battalions of Remiremont, the picked soldiers of the frontier.

With the post was an officer who had just reached it on a round of inspection. He told me that the headquarters of the army of the Vosges was at Mirecourt.

"This rain is very bad luck," he continued, making an expressive grimace; "it will send as many men into the hospital as two hours' hard fighting. However—the fortune of war! But it's not so glorious to be laid up with congestion of the lungs as with a bullet in the side!"

But I had pricked up my ears. Far away to the northward, there was coming through wind and rain a dull booming of cannon.

"They are still fighting," I cried.

"It is the pursuit," remarked the Frenchman; "we stick to them now, till we drive the canaille behind the Rhine."

I pushed on, and came to the large village of Mattaincourt.

The retreating enemy had blown up the central arch of the long stone bridge which here carried the Epinal road across the Madon; but the victors had crossed by the fords near by, and cleared the hill beyond in the twilight. Already a company was repairing the gap by electric light. The streets of the village and the houses were full of weary men as at Hymont, but, beyond, the road was deserted.

I held doggedly onward, between the double row of dripping trees, and at last found myself in the streets of Mirecourt. Hungry, half-dazed with fatigue and drenched to the skin, but yet exceedingly jubilant at our Ally's glorious victory, I rejoined the headquarters of the Army of the Vosges.

But, next morning, ah, how Fate dashed the cup of rejoicing from the lip! It was then we first learned that the enemy had raided the Thames, that Sheerness was laid in smoking ruins, and my own home and south-east Essex rendered a ghastly sacrifice to the Kaiser's accursed War-God.

At the moment, lacerated, torn by the uncertainty of the doom of my father and folks, I thought I would go mad with fury and hatred.

But of the astounding end to it all!

Most truly Peace has more extraordinary and more comprehensive victories than War.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

THE FIFTH BOOK

CHAPTER I

THE TRAIL OF THE SWORD

NOT by the combatants but by the non-combatants, the civilian population and the 'folks at home,' is experienced the full weight of war. Theirs are not the excitement and the dazzling heroics of those at the front, nor the long-drawn fatigue on body and mind, that merciful narcosis which deadens the strain on over-tried nerves and evokes stubborn immobility. Theirs it is to wait, to endure the more lacerating pangs of uncertainties—to suffer, and to succour.

Yet gone in 1920 was that terrible spectre which through the later years of the nineteenth century had harassed more than one statesman of England when contemplating her in the extremis of worldwide hostilities.

Notwithstanding the stern combat waged on great waters by the warships of the six Powers now involved in warfare, their merchantmen traversed the great ocean 'lanes' in peace and without fear of molestation, the right of search and capture having become void consequent on the abrogation of contraband and seizure of private property at sea, by a three-fourths majority of representatives attending the

Peace Conference of 1917—an abrogation, agreed on, it may be said, as reluctantly by Great Britain, unwilling to stay the amelioration of the hardships of war on communities indirectly concerned, as in all willingness by Germany in the interests of her ever-increasing mercantile marine and its worldwide ramifications.

Starvation, resulting from a state of war, no longer menaced England's millions. The narrow margin of safety lay not between national prosperity and starvation but life and death to the British Empire.

Humanitarianism in its very alleviating of the hardships of war tends to limit the factors governing its issues to those primary ones—the victory and defeat of military combatants; and to negative damage and suffering as regards the civilian populace. In a word or two, war becomes prize-fighting on a gigantic scale, the Powers, great and small, holding the ring, and the nations of the respective combatants—their backers—to pay or be paid as Destiny decrees the result.

But just as disease attacks the weakest point of the part affected, so the baneful consequences of Britain being at war was reacting disastrously on the Exchange and money markets, which already had become unsettled through the socialistic programme of Mr. Marlborough's Ministry, and its so-called 'readjustment of taxation,' effected for the most as yet through seizing and distributing the profits of private property.

So grave was the situation rapidly becoming that on the forenoon of June 15 a committee of leading financiers from the City, together with the Governors of the Bank of England and the Chairmen of the Joint-Stock and great private banks, conferred with

the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the best steps to be taken to meet the ensuing financial crisis.

§ 1

"You can say what you like, Mr. Savill," remarked Mr. Hannay of Messrs. Statham & Tucketts, to the Premier's private secretary sitting at the other side of the business table in Mr. Hannay's spacious room, 10, Birchin Court, "but the Government must come to our assistance; Mr. Statham and most of the others who have gone along to Whitehall are resolute on that. This Ministry have got themselves to blame for the coming crisis—it would have arisen apart from us having to find money for the War Loans. The upper classes can hardly call anything their own, and the middle class is getting between the National-Labour grindstones as well. All this spoliation is driving capital out of the country."

"No, no," replied Lesley, with a slight, ridiculing laugh, "that is all nonsense, as you know, Mr. Hannay! The War Loans will be easily subscribed to by our own people. . . . As regards the spoliation, well, you know my opinions well enough without my entering into them at present—or, I wouldn't be Mr. Marlborough's private secretary."

"Of course, I know them. The whole party of you spin them off the tip of the tongue, by sheer rote," snapped the little rotund stockbroker, whose well-fed air consorted so oddly with his grey, meagre face. "But it is because men like you and your father, like myself and partners, risk our fortunes that the loans are subscribed. Take the municipalities in the industrial districts in the north, where your National-Labourites rule the roost and have put some

of their demi-socialistic essays into practice—only one of them is taking up any of the War Loan stock. They are being given every inducement. And only Huddersfield has come up to scratch. . . . Patriots! Most of them won't lift a pea-shooter, if we are invaded."

"Y-e-s," Savill assented reluctantly, "their continued stiff-necked attitude towards militarism is at present a little unreasonable, with the possibility of invasion ahead of us. . . . That 'passive blockade of war,' such as James Holyoke and the Social-Democrat group hanker after, is only a degree or two removed from their negation of militarism. . . . Half-past two! By Jove. . . must hurry back again. . . . Yes, Mr. Savill's scrip, send along to Robarts, Lubbock and Co., as he desired; but mine keep by you meantime."

"No fresh news at Whitehall of the war, Mr. Lesley?" asked Hannay, rising from his morocco-padded business chair to accompany his client across the room to the inner door. "No further news from Cairo?"

"No! . . . Pannerden still holding out. A magnificent defence. The Germans won't find Holland so easy a nut to crack, before the Allies move in her defence."

"A magnificent defence! No news from Cairo yet, though? God help our people there. So few troops and the whole populace in arms."

But just then a *Suffrage* newsboy came rushing through Birchin Court yelling 'Desperate Fightin' in Cairo'; and like a youth of sixteen Hannay bolted foı the nearest window overlooking the Court, Lesley Savill at his heels.

As the continued account of the Cairo insurrection set forth by the *Suffrage* is as impartial as it is trust-

worthy in details, it is given, together with the later telegrams from Robert Douglas.

§ 2

THE REVOLT IN EGYPT

Desperate Fighting with the Rebels

BLOOD AND BOMBS

Egyptian Capital in Flames

[*From Our Own Correspondent*]
[*Delayed in transit. Censored matter*]

Cairo, *Tuesday* 14.
6 a.m.

My prognostications of yesterday afternoon are correct. We are face to face with an organized and most virulent insurrection.

Cairo is bathed in blood and fire. Her streets are streets of awful battle.

If the native troops have not withstood sedition and treachery, if they join their countrymen, we shall have our backs to the wall. Everything indicates the rising has been planned with great care and deliberation, pointing to a long period of preparation.

I have delayed wiring up to this hour, owing to the impossibility hitherto of getting the matter away. The military authorities control all communications.

As the darkness closed in last night, the disorders broke out fiercer than in the afternoon.

Crowds began to issue from the native quarters, and ostentatiously parade along the main thoroughfares which were patrolled by cavalry called in from Abbasiyeh.

Opposite the Abdin Barracks, where the 4th Egyptians were kept in readiness, the first outrage occurred immediately after dark. A party carrying a green banner had just been broken up by a patrol of the King's Dragoon Guards under Lieutenant Baring, when a bomb was thrown from the outskirts of the scuffle. Several horses and troopers fell in a heap, and Lieutenant Baring was killed outright. Instantly the survivors were attacked by the excited natives, who were speedily dispersed at the point of the bayonet by two companies, that doubled out of the barracks, and rescued the surviving dragoons.

In the next hour many bombs were thrown at the police and patrols, eighteen men being killed and thirty-two wounded. The disorder heightened rapidly. I myself witnessed fighting at a dozen points, particularly in the quarters of the foreign residents and Government establishments, between mobs of fanatics and the troops, British and Egyptian, the latter so far having stood firm. The natives appear to be particularly well armed, and show signs of discipline and organization.

Everywhere, the insurgents have been throwing bombs, dealing wide-spread ruin and loss of life, the number of casualties being impossible to estimate at present. Everywhere, calls have been made on the fire brigade and its volunteers.

One bomb exploded on the terrace of *Shepheard's Hotel*, that, fortunately enough, has already been all but cleared of visitors and staff. The explosion has broken every pane of glass on both sides the street, burst in part of the front of the hotel, and killed three of the staff. Another explosion before the *New Hotel* has done less damage; but the *Hotel du Nil*,

with the narrow streets of the Muski quarter on two sides of it, has been totally wrecked. The mob forced their way in, overpowering the police, and killing an Italian waiter and a German resident in the hotel, then having gutted the splendidly appointed apartments, set the inn on fire. The firemen have just discovered a number of them, mostly Levantines, in the cellars and wine vaults, suffocated by smoke and water where they fell in their drunken orgies.

At 9 p.m., when I was making my way back to my office to gather from reports coming in what was going on elsewhere, the electric light began to go out, and in a minute or two all Cairo was plunged in darkness. To put through the reports, we have had to work by the light of my lantern.

There has been considerable mystery attached to this alarming development, but on the details obtained the affair seems simple enough.

One of the native engineers, having disconnected the telephone at the lighting station, locked the chief engineer into his office, then with the aid of the native staff cut off the switchboard from the mains, took the brushes from the dynamos, removed the armatures and damaged the field coils. The lights in the engine and dynamo-rooms, offices, and guard-rooms, they switched on to accumulators, and kept burning, so that the guards did not learn till too late that anything had happened.

The 6th Egyptian Infantry and 34th Field Battery R.F.A., from Abbasiyeh have by now reinforced us.

By hard fighting the mobs have been driven out of the foreign quarters and a cordon formed, keeping them east of a line drawn north and south from the Esbekieh Gardens to the Abdin Palace. The artillery has been

placed so as to command the main avenues leading to the quarters of the rebels.

They have attempted to rush the broad street leading to the Ali Sherif Palace, but the guns opening fire with case shot repelled them with terrible effect.

Police spies are bringing in news that in the densely-peopled network of narrow lanes going to make up the eastern part of Cairo, beyond the Khalig Canal, barricades and barbed wire entanglements are being erected by the insurgents.

The mollahs of El Azhar are preaching a Jehad. It is extremely doubtful if their Sheikh has weight enough to stop them.

As I write this, the information comes in that the authorities are about to proclaim martial law, and all persons found with bombs in their possession are to be shot on sight. This order ought to have been issued yesterday afternoon, consequent on the attack, the other day, on the Sirdar.

§ 3

1.30 p.m.

Fighting began again at sunrise.

A party of rebels managed to occupy the Palace of Mansur Pasha by the Bab-el-Khalig Canal, and opened a hot rifle fire on the Lincolns holding the bridge. Two guns of the 34th Battery were brought up, and speedily half a dozen shells crashed into the old palace. The rebels abandoned it, and the fires lighted by the exploding shells have with difficulty been extinguished.

The 4th Egyptians, who, I am glad to say, are acting as vigorously as the British troops, against their

countrymen, advanced along the Muski, have met with no resistance, and seized the bridges. The Lincolns worked along the south part of the canal, and in the long street, El Gemamiz, rushed a barricade with the bayonet; twenty-three men of them were killed in the fierce struggle, bombs being effectively used against them.

By 7 a.m., the line of canal was secured.

The 1st Lancashire Fusiliers together with the police then worked through the native quarters situated behind it, searching every house for arms.

In this operation, no resistance of any weight has been encountered except at a house near the approach to the Fish Market, where as the search party entered the doorway a heavy explosion took place, wrecking a dozen houses and starting a dangerous conflagration in their ruins. Our loss of life, five killed and fifteen wounded; innumerable natives appeared to have been killed. Without doubt, this house formed a depôt of explosives, and was fired by the desperadoes in charge as the search party entered.

The cavalry has been posted outside the city in order to watch the outlets to the desert.

The military authorities have agreed to sweep the wider streets, dividing the old city of Cairo into several blocks of close-built houses, and thus clear block after block.

The 6th Egyptians have moved down the boulevard running from the Bab-el-Khalig bridge to the citadel, and joined two companies of the Lincolns and three others arrived from the Tourah depôt. Two companies of the Egyptians on pushing across to the Mosque of Hasan Pasha have found all quiet there; and detachments of troops and police are now searching the southern quarter. Beyond one or two hand-to-

hand encounters with insurgent natives madly defending their houses, the work has been carried out with comparative ease.

It is clear the turbulent spirits have joined the main body of the rebels in the centre and north of the native quarters.

The west part of the city is now entrusted to a hastily-armed body of white volunteers, British, French, German, Greek, Italian, with a sprinkling of Arabs and Egyptians who are to be relied upon. These with the firemen and the few police are to hold the greater part of the city.

Three companies of the Rifle Brigade have just come in by train from Zazazig, having left one company of the half battalion stationed there to guard the junction. With these, and the two native and two British battalions, the 34th Battery, the guns of the citadel, and the cavalry to watch the exits, we are about to attack the last stronghold of the insurgents.

It is there the brunt of the insurrection will be found.

7 p.m.

We have had five hours' continuous hard fighting.

The day was terribly exhausting, suffocatingly hot with the desert wind and the torrid sun, together with the smoke from the many conflagrations.

The line of advance for the attack on the main body of the rebels has been the Rue Neuve, that straight street prolonging the Muski quarter to the gate near Windmill Hill. A barricade had been erected across it where the street of the Serafs intersects.

Two guns of the 34th Battery pushed across the Khalig Canal, and opened fire on the barricade. The stream of bursting shells worked havoc amongst

the rebels defending it, and in fifteen minutes they abandoned their position. Three more guns on one of the north batteries of the citadel dropped shells into their neighbourhood, their positions being easily marked from the citadel, a prominent mosque enabling the gunners exactly to locate where the cross streets lay in the masses of houses below.

Parties of engineers and Egyptian infantry have obstinately forced their way from house to house on each side of the street, blowing in partition walls, crossing courts, and driving out the parties of musketeers and riflemen that were posted in the houses to fire down into the streets.

The cannonade from the citadel has brought down a corner house, and started a conflagration that has swept rapidly into the north native quarter.

With a wild cheer, the Rifles dashed over the second barricade at the Serafs corner, and bursting through the shower of bullets, and the dust and smoke of the burning houses beyond, bayoneted the desperadoes holding on to the last. The impetus of their charge carried them through the mass of rebels counter-attacking, and completely scattered them.

A shot was fired from the El Ashraf mosque, and, though orders had been issued forbidding the men from entering mosques, our infantry in the heat of the moment forced a side door, and poured into the sacred edifice. It was with extreme difficulty that, as I understand, the officers succeeded in keeping their men in hand, and securing the lives of those in the mosque.

Meanwhile, the fire brigade and engineers have been trying to check the progress of the fires on the north side of the Rue Neuve. The Rifles and 4th Egyp-

tians are steadily clearing the lanes and alleys on both sides of it.

The Sirdar has just communicated that a deputation of Mohammedan notables has been sent to open up communications with Yussuf Pasha, President of the so-called 'Republic of Egypt,' and his confrères, who are said to be at El Azhar. They are to point out to the insurrectionary leaders that resistance is hopeless. That within an hour all the quarters of disorder will be in a blaze, if the resistance is prolonged. That the Government has no desire for the destruction of hundreds of lives and of Cairo itself, including the sacred enclosures of the mosques and that venerable home of Mohammedan learning, El Azhar. That if there is an immediate surrender, these are the terms: (1) Amnesty for the mass of the insurgents, (2) Fair trial for those accused of destruction of life and property, and for the leaders themselves. If there is not immediate surrender, no quarter will be given.

9.30 p.m.

The insurrection has collapsed.

The terms of surrender have been accepted without demur by Yussuf Pasha and Council. This speedy termination is apparently due to the fact that the subordinate leaders were betraying signs of surrendering their leaders to save themselves. They accuse the Council of having misled the people with stories that the native soldiery would join them, and that Japanese transports were hurrying into the Red Sea with reinforcements.

The troops are now collecting arms, searching houses, and dispersing the crowds that appear to watch the fires, which, it is hoped, will soon be got under.

Details of casualties are not yet forthcoming. It is stated on good authority that we have over 130 killed, the Egyptian Infantry suffering heavier losses.

I am sending to-night by letter a fuller account, to be despatched in the morning, through the kindness of a friend, per the Brindisi steamer *Italia*, Alexandria for Brindisi, but doubtless it also will be censored in the end. The air is full of rumours of naval fighting in the Far East and an encounter off Ajaccio.

——————————— *Deleted by Cairo censor.*

Ed. Suffrage.]

§ 4

In Cairo then the party of insurrection had been taught a very severe lesson, which as the days went on was emphasized by the prompt trial by court-martial and the execution in public of bomb throwers and incendiaries.

The danger of continued disorder was removed by the fidelity of the Egyptian troops. Everywhere they remained faithful to their colours.

At Alexandria the Khedive, who had intended to go to Vienna, had had to content himself with remaining in his palace of Ras-el-tin, situated on the point between the two harbours at Alexandria. In front of the Palace windows, the two second-class cruisers, *Hawke* and *Talbot* lay at the man-of-war anchorage, keeping sharp watch, and ready at a moment's notice to man and arm boats and disembark landing parties.

There was however a long record of local disturbances in the Delta.

For many weeks the troops and police had incessantly to take measures against renewed outrages, and the attacks on the railways and canals, and

other harassing efforts which the party of disorder persisted in, though the natives as a whole disavowed them. The arduous work of repression was necessarily of a protracted nature through lack of reinforcements, those despatched from England on June 10 to 11 being ultimately sent on to Australia, the Mediterranean having been cleared of the enemy's squadron.

§ 5

But if the news of the successful repression of disorder in the capital of Egypt caused a wave of belief to pass through the Country that England would as usual 'muddle through' notwithstanding her unpreparedness for war, it was a belief to be at once much shattered.

On the evening of June 15 the German High Seas fleet daringly attacked Portsmouth, and menaced Devonport, as it swept down Channel en route for the open waters of the West Atlantic.

Faithfully had Germany stood to the terms of the Peace Conference of 1913 and restricted her Naval Estimates, basing them, like the other Powers, on the standard arrived at by the Conference itself; and —faithfully had She also maintained her national characteristics of thoroughness and efficiency; just as Great Britain had maintained hers, that however suitable they have been in past times are in the accelerated pace of the twentieth century but conducive to national doom. Without any excessive strain and without experiencing gross defects, Germany had swiftly, methodically, mobilized her vessels in reserve, her great conscript reserve enabling her to fill up deficiencies at once without waiting for the more highly

trained 'volunteer' reservists, many of whom were in her merchant marine overseas. But Britain, She lagged just as She has always lagged; just as She lagged at the Fashoda Crisis (the after-excuse, that it was now discovered the Frenchmen had lagged too).

Her first home-fleet based on Chatham-Sheerness had hurriedly proceeded to sea at 1.5 p.m. on the 15th; the *Indefatigable*, flagship of the first home-fleet cruiser squadron, Rear-Admiral A. V. Britton, M.V.O., then spread out to the eastward, having previously reported by wireless telegraphy to Whitehall that a fleet of ten large warships had been sighted in lat. 2° 15′ long. 51° 30′ steering N by E at twenty-two knots, formation column line ahead.

Already that forenoon, the furthest-flung unit had heard the distant sound of heavy and prolonged firing in the direction of the Texel, as Vice-Admiral Grötz endeavoured to force the passage into the Zuider Zee.

But as regards the second home-fleet—the remaining squadron on which England's offensive and defensive now depended, consequent on the despatch of the twenty-three vessels in commission to the Pacific and China Sea on June 5 and 6—the units composing it being in Dockyard Reserve, it was yet preparing for sea.

When, that evening in June 1920, Portsmouth, the very ganglion of Britain's naval existence, was impetuously attacked, several Devonport units of the second home-fleet were still awaiting the arrival of heavy guns replacing their worn-out armament: guns forged into being in the 'Eight Hours' Play' arsenals—that sop to National-labour's imperious demands. Only its senior flagship, the *Hood* (new first-class battleship), together with the *Albion*, were lying at Spithead, the old armoured cruisers, *Duke*

of Edinburgh and *Black Prince*, five cables in their rear, all still busy with colliers and their Temperley transporters shooting the tons of anthracite into their black, gaping bunkers.

England's anti-militarism now so strongly, so recklessly, developed by the party in power had not only crippled her military arm but withered the thews of her Navy, that 'one, long, mobile arm.'

This then was the state of her home-defence fleets when through the ineffective patrol of the mouth of the English Channel—arrangements still being bandied about between France's Minister of Marine and the Quai d'Orsay, the British Foreign Office and Admiralty —the High Seas Fleet of Germany stormed through it.

The first 'German Sea' squadron, handled so daringly, audaciously, by Admiral Prince von Eisenstein, by its feint to the northward had succeeded in detaching the Channel Fleet, seven units, from its watch, and drawing out the first home-fleet. Profiting by the great lack of British cruisers in commission, and under cover of the heat-haze rapidly thickening in the windless atmosphere as afternoon passed on, Admiral Loesch, Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Navy, had thrust his fifteen mighty battleships through the narrow eastern neck of Channel, running down the *Sentinel*, terminal vessel of the British vedettes suddenly looming out ahead, before she could loose off a single gun.

The bold take Chance by the forelock, and she right often says them yea.

Holding westward along the coastline where land-haze welled seaward deepening the screen, and inshore of the Channel traffic and few British scouts closing up on the proposed line of French observation vessels,

the German High Seas Fleet had come down against Portsmouth.

Hurry, worry, and feverish activity there had swiftly heightened to within a degree or two of panic on the wireless receivers of the central signal station taking in the ominous news, which in accordance with the centralization of naval affairs in the War Board at Whitehall under the supreme authority of the Committee of Defence, had first to be transmitted to headquarters, thus causing the loss of invaluable time. Only the steadiness and instant resource of the Admiral Superintendent and his staff prevented the perplexing bustle from becoming an appalling confusion. As yet, too, no idea had been obtained concerning the enemy's strength beyond the conflicting reports from the few coasters sighting them.

At 7.45 p.m., as submarines D2 to D12, moving out to reinforce the four vessels of the old B class protecting Spithead anchorage, came abreast of the *Victory*, a dockyard tug, which had been taking off the gangs of men, re-inspecting the great boom stopping the harbour entrance between Blockhouse Fort and Point Battery, fouled the spikes on the great fore-and-aft balks as she was getting way on. She tore out her side as she swung clear, and caught in the tideway drifted in a sinking condition down-stream, to sink into the fairway between the pontoons and obstruct the passage.

It was just as the winding engines in each fortification put on power to pull the huge venetian-blind pontoons further apart, that the sullen thunder of hostile guns rolled through the dull evening, and the Spithead forts awoke into furious crashing.

As the High Seas Fleet had come some four miles

off the Owers, abreast of the Hooe Bank, Admiral Loesch had swung W by N with his first squadron of nine 21,000-ton battleships, while his second squadron under Admiral Baron von Rottenstein stood on to the westward, subsequently to round St. Catherine's Point, and stand in on the Needles. The enemy, though not wholly unaware of the general unpreparedness of the last line of British naval reserves, placed no minor estimate on the valour and initiative of British seamen.

Maintaining a very close watch for the approach of submarines or warships by means of his underwater microphones as well as by lookouts, Admiral Loesch swooped down at seventeen knots on Spithead, his flagship, *Fürst Bismarck*, leading surely, unhesitatingly, just as if the foggy dusk was clear daylight, showing to the cool and alert eyes of his officers and lookouts their own familiar landmarks.

Then suddenly as the telephone-bell of the underwater signalling cabin trilled out in alarm on her bridge, a shaft of white light streamed out to port, to be followed instantly by the crash of the *Black Prince's* starboard broadside of 9·2 and 6-inch guns as the British cruiser swirled round in her pelt for home. Like abrupt thunder, the 15·5-inch guns of the flag ship's port broadside and that of the second in her van flamed forth simultaneously; and the hurricane blast of great projectiles caught the after parts of the cruiser as she veered. Ahead, British guns burst out with stunning clamour for motor vedettes retiring before the enemy's approach had verified the news; but louder for the moment came the reverberating roar, when the *Black Prince* with her quarter beaten in and after shell-rooms fired went up in one immense flash of crimson fire.

As the *Fürst Bismarck* with all her guns belching landward upon panic-stricken Portsmouth and her crowded dockyard turned sharp sixteen points to port, to stand ESE for the offing, the outer Nab to starboard, her short-circuit transmitter crackled with orders to her second division in the rear to turn together sixteen points to starboard and fall into rearward station on consorts passing them. It was the certainty of submarine attack and the necessity of preserving his splendid vessels as battle and seaworthy as possible that hindered Admiral Loesch from bringing his full force into action.

Yet the damage wrought by the four new units of the German first division, as they rapidly, steadily turned in succession, hurling out broadsides of shell from their batteries of twelve 15·5 inch rifled Krupps, was terribly severe on Portsmouth Town and Portsea and the adjacent dockyard.

Seaward, the great forts were firing heavily but ineffectively at unseen enemies; but landward, the Germans were throwing their concentrated weight of 1586-pounder missiles with amazing accuracy within the limits 'plotted out,' demarcating jetty, dock, and naval barracks.

Out of the night to seaward their huge shells curved, whistling and shrieking, to burst with crimson and yellow glare in and over town and dockyard, rending stout buildings and making houses leap to pieces.

The vessels at the gun wharves, and the destroyers in dock, were much damaged by the long-range shell-fire. Another crash and quaking, and the paved street suddenly spouted forth a fresh volcano, tearing out shop-fronts and splitting roofs and house-walls asunder. . . . Again the annihilating blast. . . . With

head down, and hands over ears, and often eyes, too, men, women, and children ran wildly about, seeking shelter from the deadly hail of splinters and the falling wreckage.

Many in their paroxysm of terror amidst the monstrous salvoes, and the dust, the din, the stupefying stench of explosive gases, lost their way in the streets they once knew so well; and not knowing whether they had been struck, but only that the next tornado of horror and death was rushing on its way, suddenly woke up to find themselves in Southsea and safety. For here, though street-lengths of windows were cracked and shattered, and chimney pots and loose fixtures tumbled down, there appeared to be but little damage done to human life and building.

At the outset of the war, though not throughout it, Germany strictly observed the text, if not the spirit of the conditions that had been arrived at by the successive Peace Conferences in their aim to limit the zone of military operations on land and sea, and secure those not directly concerned in warfare from damage to property and loss of life.

Of a sudden, the night sky ceased to rain horrors and death, and only the pounding of the seaward forts smote the air like a ding-dong thunderstorm. In many quarters of the bombarded area the glare and ruddy smoke of rising fires illumed the murky atmosphere, and ambulance men and fire-brigades were being kept busy.

At 8.58 the forts stopped firing, one by one. In the surprise of silence ensuing there pealed warning and prophetic echoes from the minute guns of the *Duke of Edinburgh*; her waterline blown in for twenty-three feet abaft her port forward turret and her

after turret beaten into scrap steel as she had turned in the wake of the *Hood* and *Albion*. These battleships firing sullenly had had to stand westward along the Solent, being unable to retire in time behind Portsmouth boom.

The British Lion had certainly had more than a whisker or two singed.

§ 6

The news of the brief but effective bombardment of Portsmouth came like a thunderclap, spreading consternation and amazement. Crowds thronged the streets all night, the hysterical fears of many aggravated by the strictly censored accounts of these tragic few minutes as detailed in successive editions of the newspapers.

In London, excited throngs gathered at street corners and before the offices of the News Companies and the news recorders of enterprising journals; and the ubiquitous demagogue informed his credulous hearers that the south coast lay completely at the mercy of the enemy. But the authorities, forewarned by their recent experiences as to the behaviour of the hybrid populace of the metropolis, had promptly taken measures to deal with any emergency arising out of mob clamour.

The minds of millions of Britons were now being agitated by the same question. It was being bandied from tongue to tongue from John o' Groats to Land's End. Swiftly it was to be re-echoed overseas, and throughout Australasia, there to evoke harassing dreads and terrible fears.

Why had England failed to hold her own Narrow Seas?

In Lesley Savill's room at 10, Downing Street, Spencer was walking up and down with short, quick steps, heedlessly trampling the numerous newspapers strewed on the floor alongside Savill's writing-table, his hat cocked on the back of his bald head, and necktie awry as usual.

"Yes, the beginning of the end," he jerked out in reply to Savill, with a characteristic fling of his right hand as if throwing his words from him. "The hubbub had just begun about a date for discussing all this infernal row—Grouch, as usual (you know), trying to get in edgeways that every body can do everything right but an Englishman, who does everything wrong except when he goes in for lickspittle and kowtowing to foreigners bouncing him—well, he had no sooner sat down than Smythe rises, and in that ironical voice of his moves for the adjournment of the House pending the appointment of a Select Committee, for supervision of general military and naval information and data and foreign and colonial affairs instead of having them all thrashed out in the House at Question Time for use by the enemy."

"Yes, yes," said Savill testily, looking at the timepiece on the table, just under his eye. "I know all about it. . . . This Portsmouth affair has brought about the adjournment easier and sooner than Mr. Marlborough expected, even with the Opposition plumping for it, with one-third of our party. Good thing, it has come off the Opposition's bat. Country might think we wanted to try and hide things in the Select Committee. Look at this Portsmouth affair. No harm done to the Germans so far as we are aware, yet the town bombarded, the vessels at the gun wharves damaged, and 188 people killed. . . . Good God,

the very notion of the *Hood* and *Albion* having to retire. . . . What the dickens were the picket boats and submarines doing—sleeping? Some one ought to hang for this."

But for a second or two the Parliamentary secretary did not reply. Having crossed to the open window, he was leaning out over the sill, hat in hand, to cool himself and win a breath of fresher air blowing from the garden walks and dewy groves of St. James's Park. With pitiless monotony the rumbling roar of London traffic beat into the silent room.

A quick ear might have picked out an undernote suddenly greatening the mighty diapason of the world's greatest city. But neither of the secretaries, perturbed and harassed, took note of it.

"The submarines could not get at 'em in time. But you say some one ought to hang for this," Spencer slowly repeated, withdrawing into the room. "It will be a mighty big hanging then. The Admiralty has only taken its cue from the Government, and the Government from the Party in power; and we got our mandate from the Country. . . . You may call me a turncoat, Savill, but it has come to me for a considerable time back—we National-Labourists are much too 'homeward bound.' We have been starving the very services on which we ought to rely for protection in our advance up the higher plane. . . . If Mr. Marlborough keeps in power it is because he is Mr. Marlborough, and not the Leader of his Party. Hullo! Something's happened. Just hear the cheering."

As the hurrahs swelling with deepening volume now caught Savill's ear he nodded, and opened his lips to speak; but on the desk telephone trilling forth

its summons close at his elbow he caught up the microphone.

"Yes . . . yes . . . Savill. Who, d'ye say. . . . Oh, the *Suffrage*. . . . Ferris? . . . . Well? . . ."

"By Jove, it's Mr. Marlborough, they're cheering. Him and Stodge," interjected Spencer in a somewhat surprised and gratified voice. "And Portsmouth hashed up this very evening, and the Old Flag turning tail on the enemy! Did you ever!"

" . . . 'No-Alliance' mass meetings, you say,—*Suffrage* and *Herald* offices attacked. Deputations interviewing Senators of Foreign Relations Committee," then Savill's voice changed, dismay charged its eager notes. "What, . . . Nancy occupied and the French defeated—I don't believe it. Thanks though for your American news; one can never know too much or too soon, at present. . . ." Then jamming down the receiver into its rest, he hurriedly followed Spencer from the room.

When the Prime Minister entered the stone-floored hall of No. 10, Downing Street, his carriage was not that of one confronted with disruption of his ministry and the disastrous course of hostilities.

His step was more alert, his eye brighter, his whole appearance more buoyant than Savill had observed for many days now. The slight flush on the grey cheeks of his full face accentuated the puffiness of the heavy eyelids. On addressing his secretaries, he broke out into a long-forgotten mannerism, a gesture, expression of his hands and arms, telling so wholly spontaneously the inwardness of his thought.

From Whitehall the cheering still penetrated the ear.

It was the pæan of England's multitude to the strange magnetic charm of the National-Labour Premier—that

magnetic charm which together with his versatile character and imperturbable high ambitions, his shrewd mind and singular grip of men if not principles, enabled him to drag victory out of the jaws of defeat.

"Ah, gentlemen, the turn of the wheel. . . . Almost all my Cabinet have resigned. We may be instantly in the throes of a dissolution—war or no war."

"Impossible, sir," broke from both secretaries.

"I think not, I think not," replied Mr. Marlborough, in a short, grim voice turning to go to his sitting-room; "the majority of the members of my Cabinet averse to the appointment of the Committee on Affairs have forthwith intimated their resignation. . . . A Committee on Affairs, unconstitutional but absolutely necessary in the twentieth century to prevent the enemy from deriving advantages rising out of questions asked and discussed. . . . Mr. Spencer, I will need you ten minutes hence. . . . Yes, I require you now, Savill."

"I received the information from the *Suffrage*, sir," Lesley ventured to say as he accompanied him to the private sitting-room on the floor above the Cabinet Council Room.

"These international newspapers are the nations' diplomatists nowadays," remarked the Premier shortly. "What does Senator Stillman say? . . . The feeling in the States? . . ."

"The wire from Washington is, sir, that 'No-Alliance' deputations are interviewing the Senators, and 'No-Alliance' mass meetings are being held in the 'German' States. At New York, both the *Herald* and *Suffrage* have just had their offices wrecked."

Mr. Marlborough turned sharp on his heel on the threshold of the sitting-room. He gave vent to his

ambiguous rejoinder; it was as if he was speaking to himself.

"He is a very foolish shopkeeper, who deliberately picks a quarrel with his best customer. There are more far-reaching factors than the ties of blood and sentiment. In an alliance for Europe, the States and Britain may not unite, I fear, after all. Our tariff bund inside the Empire has made Germany America's best and most influential customer. . . . Only France for us in Europe; and already she has had to evacuate Nancy."

"Evacuation may be part of her strategy, sir—as it is of Holland's."

But Mr. Marlborough had passed into the room. He stepped to where on the panelled wall, opposite Sir Robert Walpole, hangs Millais' singularly happy portrait of England's great Liberal Minister. For a second or two he gazed stedfastly at it as if to draw from it innerly strength.

In the soft glow of the shaded lights, the splendid eyes of the great Premier, so full of fire and energy, seemed to dominate the chamber, just as they had done in bygone times.

"I wonder," Mr. Marlborough muttered slowly to himself, as if in mental pain, "ah, I wonder, what he would have done?"

It was just at this very minute that away down Channel the broadsides of Germany's High Seas fleet were bursting on the seaward fortifications of Plymouth-Devonport—and great guns were smacking out in reply—as Admiral Loesch held onwards for the West Atlantic and his West Indian base.

Were the naval strategics of 1805 about to be repeated?—and England left defenceless to invasion?

CHAPTER II

THE TRAIL OF THE SWORD

(Continued)

WAR—war—that was the resounding note which on June 17, 1920, engrossed Great Britain, her Press, and all political and social circles, high and low. Even to the most sanguine observer there appeared no peace either abroad or at home. The call of the Great Awakening was rapidly stirring up symptomatic unrest even in the nations not concerned in the far-flung hostilities.

Across the splendid vision of peace and concord to be brought about by that 'sweet reasonableness,' so strenuously advocated and worked for by its apostle, John Stanhope Marlborough—there now stalks the grim Mephistopheles that the War-God always brings in his train, in particular during his visitations on England. Mephistopheles, that rends the kingdom from within whilst rending it from without. Mephistopheles, that in the National-Labour Party, was seeking to force Britain along an abasing path toward arbitration and conciliation when none were possible save with dishonour to the Empire.

Yet against this sinister background is set in overpowering significance the tragic figure of England's Prime Minister. He that forthwith abandoned his life-task—abandoned the adulation upon which he fed,

and the ambition that so often had succoured him—to serve England, not as he but She desired. Too long had he made her high destinies the play-ball of his own and party ends. In the rancour of political annals he may go down as 'Turncoat Marlborough,' or the 'Sheffield Shuffler' even as he himself had once so derisively termed another. Yet in the darkest hour of his downfall, ay, above all, at that blood-red moment when he, the Apostle of Peace, made to lay down his life in expiation, he stands as one who ever fronted the foe.

But whether or not an inspired 'leader' compared with the historical figures of England's Prime Ministers, he had to fulfil his destinies. Even now their menacing voices were moving him.

§ I

Those who turn to the journals of 1920 may wonder at the comparative paucity of the political interest shown save in the few great organs representative of party policy; but for years the British Public as a whole had been giving less and less attention to home politics, now in 1920 that great and glorious game of 'Beggar-my-Neighbour.'

Under the mounting world-wave of triumphant Labour Democracy—one of the necessary co-agents of progress along the 'higher planes,' and one, too, which no resistance appears potent enough to stay—the classes in Britain had grown apathetic to a large degree, and the masses were afflicted with the inertia of long-continued success.

Politics were becoming the business of professional politicians.

But now to all, hostilities were appealing with an absorbing zest, with a sting, excitement, that demanded even more than the strictly censored accounts of events supplied.

In all truth, the innate fighting instinct of the Anglo-Saxon had leapt up to the crash of battle; it was responding to the call to action. Peace on earth and goodwill towards men, based on the pen-and-ink of Peace Conferences and Ambassadors, are but visionaries' dreams, the cobwebs of idealistic imagination.

Thus it was that the adjournment of the Two Houses, followed at once by the resignations of the assertive mediocrities of Mr. Marlborough's Ministry as a belated protest against hostilities and negatived discussion in Parliament, together with his audience in the afternoon with the King at Buckingham Palace aroused somewhat less excitement than the naval crisis; the dangers gathering on Australia, the stubborn resistance offered to the Germans by Holland, or the abandonment of Nancy by the Ally.

Yet Editors and news associations frantically sought to obtain by hook or by crook authentic information regarding the ministerial crisis concerning which the wildest rumours were bruited; but all in vain.

As Lesley Savill that afternoon truthfully replied over the wire to his sister at the *Suffrage* office, also to Caleb Dreischer urgently telephoning him from his stockbroker's, he had no necessity to refuse information—he knew of none to give.

He did not mention, however, overhearing early that morning, as he had tapped discreetly before enter-

ing with despatches sent in by the India Office for Mr. Marlborough's perusal, the Premier direct his parliamentary secretary to deliver his note personally to Sir F. Symthe, nor that, shortly after, the remaining members of the Cabinet had met in deliberation on the crisis.

Very little is known of what took place at the last meeting of the last National-Labour Ministry in that historic Cabinet Room, which, double-doored, double-windowed, lies reticent and secluded at the back of No. 10, Downing Street. It was brief—it may or may not have been stormy. It certainly formed the prelude to that astounding change in matters political, which took place in the later months of 1920—that change which left Mr. Marlborough a broken and disappointed man.

When Lesley Savill—after waiting anxiously for a little in the spacious, white-painted lobby at the end of the long narrow corridor leading from the entrance hall and looking into the Cabinet Chamber—stepped into the Room, the Ministers having left, there was suddenly graved on his memory that which he but very seldom and very reluctantly touched on in later years even to his wife and his most intimate friends.

At the end of the large eighteenth-century mahogany table, standing in the middle of the room with its green cloth, and the blotting pad, inkstand and unused paper of each Minister, Mr. Marlborough was still sitting, his back to the strong light from the two north-west windows. His head was bowed upon his hands, which hid the upper part of his face. His whole attitude was so rigid, ominous, that a sudden foolish fear swept through Savill, and with leaping heart he hurried down the spacious, white-panelled room ; the

thick carpet covering the oak floor deadening the sound of his footsteps.

"From his Majesty, sir."

Not until he spoke did the Prime Minister become aware of him. And to his private secretary, sight of that aged, grey face turned upon him eclipsed the bright and sunny day outside, and dulled all excitement.

"His Majesty," Mr. Marlborough muttered, putting out a hand for the summons, his voice unsteady, his lisp more pronounced than ever. "Yes! Yes! I will go to His Majesty, and tell him. I know—he will understand. . . ."

Ay, this most 'democratic' of Prime Ministers was hearkening in his bitterest hour to the long-stilled voices of hereditary traits and instincts, bidding him lay his difficulties, his hopes and fears, before that wise and impartial monarch who had ever pointed England's path with so light, so steady and sure a hand.

§ 2

What was the true nature of this historical Cabinet meeting?

It can never be fully disclosed. Yet material for surmise as to the inwardness of it and the later developments may be found by the inquisitive on page 167, chapter I, volume II, of Mr. Marlborough's biography, written by the Foreign Secretary of his Administration.

> 'The seal of official secrecy set on Cabinet meetings is not to be broken, even in this most democratic and outspoken age. But in con-

sequence of the extraordinary political developments ensuing on the establishment of peace, developments though appearing at the time as impossible, as impracticable, yet owe much of their success to Mr. Marlborough's shrewd and almost miraculous gauging of character and of the future of our political parties, I, with the consent of the few surviving members of the last National-Labour Cabinet, and at the request of both Houses, and of His Majesty Himself, have availed myself of my recollection concerning Mr. Marlborough's momentous words in this last Cabinet meeting of the National-Labour Administration, June 17, 1920.'

Mr. Marlborough.—*The National-Labour Party can no longer sustain unaided that Peace and Progress which Britain requires in the fulfilment of Her high calling amongst the nations. It, I opine, must now be equally distributed over all parties alike of her electorate. The goal England aims at cannot be reached through a dissolution; acting so, I strongly assert, we would be unable to avoid doing vast and irreparable injury to England, to England's finances, and to the Empire our fathers have bequeathed us; we would be unable, too, to avert strong unrest amongst such nations as are well-disposed towards England, and we would stand impeached by those to whom we are committed in fulfilment of treaty obligations and the ties of kinship, with regard to the independence of Holland and the inviolability of even one inch of British soil—whether it be far overseas in Australasia or not.*

To achieve victory, that victory crushing, annihilating militarism, that accursed Devil's Drag, the

greatest possible cohesion of public opinion—of certaincy, unanimity—of action, yes, of blood and steel, must be placed in the hands of His Majesty's Government. . . . There are tokens—I can say, unquestionable tokens—that the strong 'forward policy' of Britain towards the negation of war, towards the stability of peace and arbitration, has set in motion most tremendous agents that must bring about these very ends infinitely sooner and in an infinitely more effective fashion than the swiftest and most awful of human hostilities could ever effect.

§ 3

At 7.15 p.m., the electric landau of Sir F. Smythe drew up before No. 10, Downing Street; and gravely the still lithe sparse Leader of the Opposition was seen to step out and cross the pavement, and passed behind the door. Already a few wise pressmen were speeding for Fleet Street in automobiles or electric cars, while their fellows struggled with others of the excited throngs to make use of the wireless short-circuit and telephonic kiosks dotting the pavements and 'refuges' along Whitehall and Parliament Street.

'The greatest possible cohesion'—it was soon to become an accomplished fact surpassing even the wildest expectations of Mr. Marlborough, though not, perhaps, of Mr. Holyoke.

§ 4

Yet, though the response to humanity's call was to become rapid and irresistible, still more rapid had hostilities in Europe and Asia continued their cyclic dimensions.

While Britain—still waiting impatiently for publica-

tion of the official information, as yet necessarily retarded, relating to the collusion between Germany and Japan—was hurled through political turmoil and change, the Press poured forth news of victory, defeat, and all the harassing and dread excitements of war on land and sea.

'THE CHANNEL AND FIRST HOME-FLEET LINK UP'

IS

'THE GERMAN NORTH SEA FLEET FLEEING NORTHWARD BEFORE THE FORCES OF PELEW?'

'STRANGE WARSHIPS IN THE MORAY FRITH.'

'ONE DIVISION HARWICH SUBMARINES TO REINFORCE THE THAMES.'

'HAVE THE FRENCH INTERCEPTED ADMIRAL LOESCH OFF USHANT?'

'HEAVY FOG IN THE CHANNEL.'

These headlines in themselves afford enough explanation.

But even as the centralization, sole direction, supreme authority of Germany's military affairs centred in her War-Lord went far to bring about her disasters on the Heights of Hareville and Remoncourt, so, too, the absence of these autocratic features in the direction of her naval affairs connoted a wary and progressive scheme of naval strategics. The German Admiralty, unhampered by that 'prestige' through the obstinate adulation of which their country suffered irretrievable reverses and defeat along her western frontier, and wholly bent on detaching from England her sole pro-

tection, the portion of her Navy in home waters strengthened by the Atlantic Fleet of France, had every chance of accomplishing their aims.

The Invasion of England. The successful raiding of London, the World's Metropolis the dream of German strategists from von Moltke downwards. Above all, the claims therewith obtained to be presented to the Court of Adjudication of Prize Claims and Indemnities at the Hague, to the establishment of which England had reluctantly consented.

These were the great and splendid, the omnipotent tokens of victory, with which the Leader of Germany's destinies intended to dazzle and propitiate his people.

§ 5

In Holland, however, the arms of Germany had suffered a first and early check.

The enemy there, having overrun the Low Country up to the 'Utrecht line,' and also begun their attempt to reduce the inundation, had prepared themselves for an uninterrupted blockade of the Dutch positions.

Two river gunboats had worked down the Waal as far as the bridge of Zalt Boemel, over which the Utrecht railroad crosses the river. Finding further progress barred by a strong Dutch battery on the river dam at Brakel, they patrolled between the railway bridge and the bend of the stream above the battery, thus watching the south-east edge of the inundation. Half a battalion of the 40th Infantry (Brunswickers) lay at Zalt Boemel, their posts out to westward along both banks of the river.

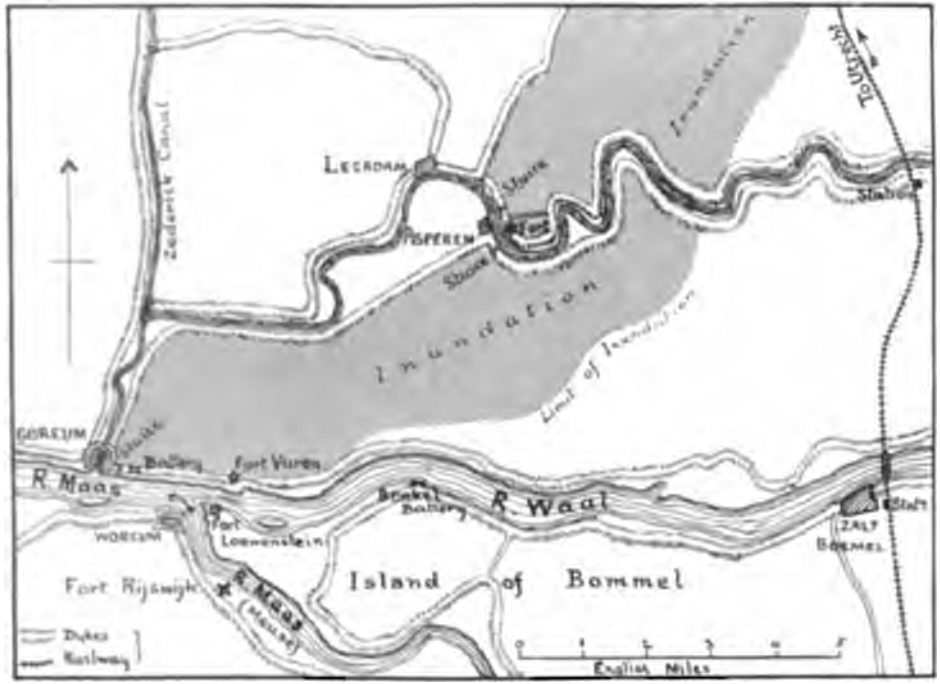
On the night of June 19, they had a rude awakening,

and a still ruder surprise before they could rub the sleep out of their eyes.

The night was dark and very cloudy, and the wind blowing in gusts from northward was driving down a confusing mizzle. About 12.18 a.m. the German post on the south bank of the Waal was attacked by a force of Hollanders, consisting of two companies of the 8th Regiment of the line, a section of engineers from Gorcum, and 600 men of the schutterij. They had been conveyed in troop-boats along the Waal and Meuse, to a point on the island of Boemel, and thence had worked their way to their objective, across the swampy polders south of the Waal.

First came the regulars and then the militiamen. Silently the men of the 8th rushed the German outpost, bayoneting the sentries, and capturing and driving the others into the Waal and its sludge. Not for some minutes later was the enemy on the Waal's north bank alarmed, and even then they could not make out what had happened, the stormy morning hiding the attack. Zalt Boemel, too, remained quiet till a survivor of the surprised post trailed himself into safety, a bloodstained spectre, and raised the alarm.

Meantime, however, the Dutch engineers had not been idle. Four mines were rapidly loaded with cakes of giant powder—which had been carried on the backs of some of the schutterij—and floated out, and anchored in the river, just awash; as soon as they were in position, a sapper swam out, and withdrew the plugs keeping the mechanical firing keys out of action. And as the enemy might at any moment appear from Zalt Boemel, a double line of the 8th awaited them on the raised river-bank, while the militia worked out on the polders to take the attack in flank.



Dutch Attack on the German Outposts at Zalt Bommel.

Even before the German major at Zalt Boemel was ready to move, the unexpected was happening on the river. Round the bend surged three Dutch gunboats, the river craft, *Brak*, *Bever*, and *Vos*, the first two in line abreast, the third one-and-a-half cables astern of them. Each of these craft mounted a 10½-inch casemated quickfirer forward and two machine-guns on a superstructure abaft the bridge.

Suddenly one of the German gunboats about a mile above the point of attack switched on her searchlights, and began sweeping the bank. Swiftly the relentless glare streamed along the trees beside the road topping the bank, but very few of the Dutchmen showed out except the working party. Still suspicious, the German commander slowly moved up-stream.

Major Potchefstroom in command of the Hollanders had to make a rapid decision.

"Captain van Heeren, move by the dam and the edge of the polder on Zalt Boemel," he ordered. "If the enemy come out, lie down and open fire at close quarters. You understand? . . . Yes, precisely. . . . Leave one section with me."

The men moved away in silence. Potchefstroom with a handful of engineers and men of the 8th followed in their rear for some 400 yards, then halted. Steadily the gunboat was coming on. Her consort had also switched on her searchlights but in another direction.

"At the searchlight. 1,500 metres," said the major to his infantry. "Fire."

His rifles crackled out, and the German outpost on the opposite bank instantly took up the reply. From the nearing gunboat, *Der Igel*, a sudden gout of machine-gun small shell blasted the trees overhead. Towards the village, a volley followed by a rattling fire

told that the Germans from Zalt Boemel were in touch at last with van Heeren.

"Lie down," shouted de Backer. "A few shots, to draw them on. Steady, men. . . . Cease firing."

Up the river came the deep mouthing of great guns, for the Dutch gunboats were now engaging the German vessel in that direction. By the white haze of the searchlights in the rain, they were closing, three to one. The other gunboat had increased her speed, her guns sweeping the river bank. Many of the Dutch infantry, raising their heads to fire, were shot through the neck, the temples, or the chest; and some rolled helplessly down the bank into the river, crying for succour.

There came a tremendous crash, followed by another. A sheet of fire flamed up between the Waal's banks, an irregular gap opened out in the dam; through it the black water gushed on to the polders. The gunboat shattered by the floating mine took the ground in the shallows; with that her searchlight went out, and all was darkness. The cries of injured men rang loud down the eddying wind.

Then the firing down-river ceased; and a far distant electric began to spell in winks and flashes—'Geluk.' Success it was, for both the German craft had been accounted for.

Meanwhile at Zalt Boemel also, the splendid obduracy of the Dutchmen was proving itself, even as of old.

Van Heeren when advancing on the town had become aware through his scouts that the enemy there, in all 325, rank and file, were moving along the dam in his front. One of his companies, lying down, its rear ranks kneeling, waited to bar their advance.

The remaining men of the 8th together with the schutterij stood on the alert, strung out along the polder.

A volley met the advancing column, a fierce irregular fire struck their flank. Then as the Germans halted, there had come the crash of the exploding mines; and they began to retreat, firing wildly, and in the dark doing but little damage. In their rear, van Heeren pushed along, pouring in a vigorous fire on them.

Where a tree-bordered road comes up from the south, the schutterij, who had been guided by a local farmer, cut in between the enemy and the village.

The Germans fought under conditions in which, notwithstanding their training and discipline, the odds were against them, for they were blinded by the rain and darkness, and smitten with the impression of awful disaster brought about by countless foes. Thus in the night there was a confused and fierce fight.

Van Heeren's regulars came up like a phalanx, and few of the enemy escaped them. In the hand-to-hand encounter lives were freely lost on both sides. Many of the Germans, bewildered and outnumbered, surrendered in groups, though others fought their way through and retired doggedly along the river bank.

Already on the river the Dutch gunboats were rescuing the wounded in the German wreck, and securing prisoners.

The commander of the *Vos* reported to Major Potchefstroom that after a sharp engagement, the other gunboat, 'Rhine Flotilla, No. 2,' had been taken, with her heavy gun dismounted and deck works cleared by maxim and rifle fire. The wrecked unit, *Der Igel* was No. 3 of the river flotilla. Her machine guns

and the breech-block of her big gun were removed, and her flag taken as the trophy.

At Zalt Boemel there were over 100 prisoners and a large number of wounded. Arrangements were speedily made for withdrawing these by the Meuse to Gorcum.

There was no idea of holding the village permanently. The object of the sortie had been fulfilled.

The naval force of the Germans along the lower Waal had been destroyed; and this flank of the line of Utrecht been made more secure. General von Drachenstein and his staff had been taught a severe lesson.

Germany, as Major Savill has narrated, was about to cease to be the bogey of military Europe.

§ 6

As yet, however, the interest of the Old and New Worlds was more engrossed by the startling news from the Philippines, for not yet had the legions of France hurled back their hereditary foe.

In the Archipelago of the Thousand Islands, it was that Germany's ally had entered on the first phase of her apparently deliberately-planned contest against the arms of the United States and Great Britain.

Again the nations asked: 'Who has been hoodwinked?'

Britain was soon to tell. She was to have been crushed between the upper millstone of German militarism and the nether one of Japanese aggrandisement.

CHAPTER III

THE FATE OF THE PHILIPPINES?

ON the morning of June 3, the U.S.A. authorities at Manila had awoken to find another proclamation, dated from the 'Headquarters of the Army of Liberation,' posted at a hundred street corners throughout the Philippines' capital; and, to their perturbation, as the day went on innumerable copies of it, printed on fly leaves, mysteriously appeared in the shops, cafés, and private houses.

Everywhere was it being circulated from hand to hand.

Crowds gathered in the open to peruse and comment upon it, and at one place, opposite the Nuevo restaurant, the police officials engaged in dispersing the people and tearing down the proclamation were openly attacked, one of them being mortally wounded.

The document, which was in Spanish, announced the 'Republic of the Philippines' had been proclaimed by a meeting of authorized delegates from all the islands; that a government was now constituted and in possession of the means for enforcing its authority; an army had been organized under regularly commissioned officers and that several brigades were even now taking the field. That, finally, the first and paramount duty of the 'Republic' was to expel the

Americanos, intruders in the Philippines, under a false pretext of friendship, 'only to throw off the mask on the day of victory and replace the tyranny of Spain with a new and more hateful oppression.'

. . . 'Asia for the Asiatics. . . . The Philippines for the Philippinos," was the rallying cry.

Governor Widdner, with his full knowledge of the situation, on communicating with Washington urgently requested reinforcements, also that a full and searching inquiry be made as to the complicity of the Japanese consular staff in Manila in the rioting on June 1–2, and that a force of 25-knot light cruisers be despatched from the U.S.A. Pacific fleet to patrol the Balintang Channel, north of the Island of Luzon, against gun-running and filibusters from the northward and Japan. Again, however, the views of the 'man on the spot' were ignored.

Washington bluntly informed him that reinforcements were not required unless the forces at his disposal proved incompetent in the discharge of their military duties. Concerning the 'alleged' attitude of local Japanese toward this 'flickering' of rebellion and the discovery of Japanese service rifles, the State Department was now in communication with Tokio.

Not till the startling culmination of it all came, —the wrecking of the Panama Canal—were the official optimists at Washington to rub the motes out of their eyes.

Governor Widdner, therefore, had to make use of the small force under General Crownshend Westley not only to keep the neighbourhood of Manila free of Tagal guerillas and to maintain order in the excited capital but also to guard the Manila-Lingayen railway and its many feeders, and to reinforce outlying

stations in protection of the planters. The few cruisers, gunboats, and torpedo craft, now watching for gun-runners and filibustering expeditions along the coasts were in number wholly inadequate for maintaining effective observation throughout the labyrinth of islands, straits, and creeks. Though the small flotilla of light craft on Bai Lake much facilitated the task of keeping down insurrection in the districts east of Manila.

§ 1

The insurgents in North Luzon soon gave proof of their reality. The lines of railway, telegraph and telephone, were cut repeatedly, and the guards at the stations and intelligence centres were incessantly fired upon, day and night; while on the afternoon of June 4, the town of Bakolor was most destructively raided, its small garrison being drawn out in pursuit of guerillas, and its local magazine of ammunition and other military supplies plundered and burned.

It was consequent on these serious indications that Washington directed a flying column to be sent into the country north-east of Bakolor, in order to find in what force the insurgents were, and if possible break them up. To Bakolor, then, that had been reinforced by rail and was now garrisoned by four companies of the 5th Infantry and twenty-five mounted police, General Westley despatched four more companies of the same regiment, two light quickfiring guns, four maxims manned by men of the 3rd Artillery, and two troops of the Manila Mounted Volunteers (commonly known at Manila as 'Hell's Rough-riders'), together with 200 volunteers and police sent up to hold Bakolor during the absence of the flying column. The entire force of

1,124 men was under the command of Colonel Wilson of the general staff.

A small force of scouts was formed by selecting men from the police, the mounted volunteers and the regulars; also, native guides and spies were engaged. Lieutenant Gillespie in charge of this intelligence section was warned he must only accept such information as reliable as he could to some extent verify through subsequent work of his own scouts.

The expedition crossed the railway, and marched up the north bank of the river. Thirty miles north-east of Bakolor it pitched camp, protected by wire entanglements, on a hill fairly clear of bush and overlooking the river. The water supply was protected by means of the lines of entanglements, and mules and flat-bottomed boats were made use of in bringing up supplies so as to make the camp an advanced base for the column. Already the intelligence agents had been set to work within a radius of forty miles.

On June 10, information came in that the enemy had withdrawn as usual, before the advance of the expedition; and the same evening, one of the native spies returned with the important news that General Luna was encamped in the hills two days' march to the northward, with a force of 2,000 insurgents.

Their camp was a mere bivouac situated in an open valley, and guarded by outposts in the bush to its southward. There appeared to be no outposts on the hills east and west, most probably on account of the impassable state of the country there for an army strengthened with guns and cavalry.

Colonel Wilson on obtaining the information immediately despatched the news per despatch rider and telegraph to headquarters at Manila, and late that

evening received General Westley's orders to proceed at once to crush the enemy if verification of the information came in.

Impatiently he awaited Gillespie's return. Not till June 12 did the lieutenant return minus one of his scouts, who had been killed when working in on the insurgents' camp from the southward. Gillespie reported that the bush about forty miles north of the American camp was certainly held by a screen of outposts. He himself had seen General Luna's headquarters, from the bush on the hills to westward; and his details confirmed the first report. An immediate advance was pre-eminently discreet and advisable as the enemy appeared to be extending their line of posts southward. Westward, however, of the Philippino camp only a few sentries held the ground, close in along the valley.

"Well, sir," said Colonel Wilson, on conclusion of the report. "If we can't burst up Luna's headquarters, and give him and his rabble red hell, we're no soldiers . . . . Oh demn these mosquitoes!" as the well-stung officer slapped his left cheek, then hastily let down his veil again. "Come 'long to my quarters, and have a long drink on it, and then straight to business with you all. What does the Adjutant say, 'Philippino guides?'—I say, 'No! Captain Marker,' Lieutenant Gillespie here'll lead our column; and, sirs, three days on, we net the lot of them just as the sun rises. Our horse—that are no great shakes working 'mongst all this bush—'ll advance and hold the attention of their outposts south of their camp, making the niggurs think the fight is all that side. We'll weed out all our less effective men; they stay behind and guard camp."

At break of day on June 12, the expeditionary column was on the march, under the guidance of Lieutenant Gillespie, a thin screen of scouts again working ahead. But beyond traces here and there of old bivouacs there were no vestiges of the enemy. They appeared to have a very strong belief in their security, and in the circumstances which ensued perhaps faith justified them.

When on the evening of June 15 the column halted after its third day's march through the belts of dense jungle and bush, the troops were showing signs of exhaustion, and surgeons had their hands full; yet, as soon as the word was passed round that the ground on which they were bivouacing was on the reverse slope of the hill within six miles of Luna's headquarters, a fresh spirit was infused even in the most serious cases. At 3 a.m., when the troops fell in for the advance, the ambulance litters were reported 'Empty.'

To march by night and attack at dawn—it is that which tries the hardiest soldiery with fears, alarms, and—what is worse than aggravated nerves—with a bewildering torpidity in initiative. At first, there is a certain feeling of excitement banishing all weariness of body and mind, but soon the monotonous plodding over the unknown track brings back the sense of overpowering fatigue; the men forget the coming battle; and their minds dwell only on the endless, step, step, step. Then silence adds to the feeling of weary aimlessness, and inevitably there comes to the rank and file the disheartening notion that the guides have lost their way, otherwise something ought surely to have happened ere now.

Up and down over the irregular undulations of the ground, and in and out amongst the clumps of bush

and thorn, and across marshy hollows and plashing through shallow streams, the column made its way. Here and there a mounted officer stood watching the men pass, and in a low voice ordered them to close up up or step out, then urged his horse to a trot and regained his post.

Now the ground began to rise more steeply, and the ghostly trees became fewer. A grey light in the sky showed the hunch of ground in front, with broken, black masses rising from it, straggling patches of bush.

'Halt' came the word, passed back from the front in low tones. The troops threw themselves on the damp ground, felt in their haversacks, and began to eat their dry ration; but officers were already setting to work to deploy the column, unit by unit.

Lieutenant Gillespie himself led the guns and maxims to a position just behind the ridge, and the gunners silently prepared for action, mounting their guns ready to run them forward. A small force was moved along the back of the ridge northward, to fall on the insurgents as they were driven out of camp. The companies of the 5th Infantry were deployed along the ridge, alert for the advance.

As yet Luna's forces were unalarmed, and only their sentinels were on the move. The surprise would be complete.

There came the sudden flush of light over the tree-covered hills to the eastward, marking the short twilight was nearly over and the sudden burst of tropical sunshine close at hand. 'Tum-tum-tum' sounded the drums from the camp below; and Colonel Wilson, standing behind the guns, looked at his watch, then motioned to the officer beside him.

"Open fire," said he shortly.

Beneath, lay the Philippinos' camp—a scattered confusion of wooden huts and sheds, grass and palm-leaf shelters, and a few tents, with crowds of men beginning to move about as the drum-beats roused out sleepers. One could see all of them turn like stricken men when the first gun thundered out.

Its shell burst fair, and the ring of murky smoke hanging over the camp caught the first rays of the leaping sun. 'Bang' went the second gun, and then came the incessant rapping of the two maxims. And under the fire of bustling shrapnel and small lead, the cattle and ponies stampeded, most of the insurgents broke, but others rallied and rushed towards the hill slope, down which the United States infantry were now doubling in a long extended line.

"Cease fire," said Colonel Wilson to his artillery officer. "Just plug the part of 'em that show fight. Maxims to fire only at a good target. Look after things here, I am off to join the left. We must do what we can to block their bolt-hole up the valley."

As the Colonel, following the rough track, cantered along the ridge, behind him his adjutant and two orderlies, he felt thoroughly happy. He had smashed up the strength of the insurgents. All was over but the hurrahing and the gathering up of prisoners. Ah, the slings and arrows of fortune which he was yet to experience, and that so terribly!

Speedily he overtook his force on the left as, in fours, they marched smartly down the slope, their commanding officer, Major Magrudder riding in front. No notice was being taken by them of the fugitives running along the valley track, most of them without arms: there would be enough prisoners! But the men were disappointed and grumbling—they thought it would be all

over without their having fired a single shot. The brunt of fighting was soon to be thrust upon them.

"My congratulations, Colonel! You have done it neat," said the major, saluting. "Pity, though, the scum didn't put up a fight. Just like bolting prairie-dogs. Nothing like what's going on in Europe."

"Anyhow, we have smashed them up," came the reply. "Form across the valley bottom, Major, and work right back on the camp. No useless killing. Just round up all the rebs not throwing in their arms, but shoot on sight any skittish ones making anything of a fight. We've corralled most of them, Luna included, I hope."

Quickly Major Magrudder's small force deployed, faced south, and moved on the camp, driving before them a confused mob. A few shots were fired out of the bush lining the valley, but a couple of section volleys stopped the resistance, dropping a score of Philippinos; and then the crowd broke and ran. By now the fighting along the hillside had ceased on the infantry rushing the camp. But a dropping fire came from the hills to eastward where the fugitives had rallied.

Groups of prisoners, guarded by sentinels, sat here and there on the ground. Dead men lay scattered about, like heaps of rags huddled on the grass; and the wounded insurgents looked up anxiously, expecting sudden death. A horse shot through the spine struggled to rise, and fell again and again, till an officer put his revolver behind its ear and ended its misery. A couple of huts fired by shell were burning fiercely. On the east side of the camp three companies were moving forward to break up the insurgents' rally on that side of the valley; they were deployed in skirmish-

ing line, and the deliberate fire from their rifles told they were only aiming when they saw a target. The remaining companies were being reformed, and the surgeons were busy with the wounded.

§ 2

As Colonel Wilson rode into camp he was glad to receive from Lieutenant Gillespie the insurgents' flag, torn down from the staff in front of General Luna's quarters. Yet he shook his head warningly on Captain Elliot of the Mounted Volunteers reporting his men were coming in with a few prisoners, having cleared the bush with ease on the enemy giving way rapidly.

"One would almost think there is a trap behind this flight of theirs," said he, but with a little self-confident laugh; "only, we know there isn't. Captain Elliot, hurry up your men, and push along the valley with Major Hartwood, not too far—three or four miles if the ground is open enough. Round up as many of the rebels as possible. Gillespie, inform Mahon he is to bring his guns down here and shell the bush on the other side. . . . The advance there to be supported by Major Magrudder. His men want something of a show to themselves. . . . Other companies to stay here, and clear up."

Indeed Wilson was rather pleased the engagement was not yet ended; it had come to him, his report would have a better ring to it if the fighting lasted a little longer. With considerable elation, then, he rode into the middle of the camp to have a glance at prisoners and attend to further details.

Out of the group gathered about the ambulance

shelter, a tall, khaki-clad man—as conspicuous in his height as in the broad dimensions of his amply-leafed sombrero—stepped aside on catching sight of the Colonel, and approached him at the run.

"Bully for you, Colonel," he cried, almost out of breath, as he saluted. "You're all right with Uncle Sam! I reckon you'll be hitting all the headlines to-night on The Continent. Just in time, too, the little——"

"Who the dickens are you?" interrupted the Colonel, whose self-importance had grown in the last half-hour, "what are you jawing about? Get out of my way, will ye."

"I'm the Press. Yes, sir, I'm the Associated Press, Manila representative. . . . Riker—Ulysses G. Riker. General Westley was pleased to pass me up to the front. Say, Colonel, you haven't heard the rumour? I've kept the news to myself, up here, till I got a word with you. . . . If it's true, we are in for a real hot thing here!"

Colonel Wilson twisted round on his saddle, and stared at the correspondent, whose suddenly grave voice gave emphasis to his excited face.

"No! Heard no rumour," the commanding officer replied sharply. "What d'ye mean?"

"Well," came the slow reply, "my office at Canton had just wired before I came up, that the Chinks say the Japs really are in the island here. As you know, the British China squadron is wiped out. Well, then, the Japanese transports have sailed for Australia. And Takow is nor'ard of us—not so very far away!"

"Gehenna!" rumbled the Colonel, wiping the sweat off his face, and looking at the lines of wounded who lay on improvised grass beds on the ground, "and we

lie in the line of their route. Thanks, Mr. Riker, I understand, quite. Better not say anything yourself, meantime, up here. Anyhow we've crushed the back of Luna's forces, and if the little yellow niggurs do come along we'll dose 'em with the same stuff. The States has got to do it anyhow, for them busting the Canal. Have you got your 'story'? Send it down Manila-way with my despatch-rider, if you like."

"Thanks. I have the fight—and told straight, too! I take good care the American Nation knows all about it, I do. . . . Put it there, Colonel, and I shall feel honoured."

Riker held out a sun-tanned right hand, and energetically the two of them shook hands. Just then the crackle of rifle fire still coming from the eastern hillside swelled into a shrill crescendo then dropped again. Colonel Wilson puckered his brows, and swore to himself.

His adjutant saluted. "A note from Captain Van Dorn, sir. Reports the enemy is hanging on in the bush on the eastward hills, and he wants another company. Suggests, too, an attempt to turn the enemy with a small flanking force."

Hastily the Colonel glanced over the scrawled report.

"Very well," he grunted, "send up another company. With the three already and Magrudder's two companies working on his left flank, he can surely break their resistance. He must push matters. I want to finish this desultory skirmishing, and give the men some rest. . . . Send me one of the freshest of the scouts. . . . Yes, for despatches."

Scribbled in pencil on a leaf of the Colonel's field note-book the despatch ran thus:—

> I have to report that at sunrise this morning the expeditionary column attacked the insurgents

under General Luna, in camp. Enemy now broken up and destroyed. 400 killed and wounded, and over 600 prisoners. Further captures are being made; and insurgent standard in my possession, also camp and large amount of military and victualling stores. Our losses slight, about fifty killed and wounded. All behaved most admirably during the forced march and sharp engagement. Full despatch follows.

Alas, it was not to be so. This, the first, was to be also the gallant officer's last bulletin of victory.

As the Colonel signed the report, that was being sent down to camp now in wireless connexion with Manila, he smiled to himself; a momentary thought had come to him of the big 'scare' headings that would make him famous wherever the Stars and Stripes flew. But as he lifted his eyes from the pommel of his saddle which he was using as a desk, the sight of Lieutenant Gillespie approaching quickly from the direction of General Luna's quarters, a look as black as thunder on his usually sunny face, caused a wave of irritation, of presentiment, to pass through him.

"What is wrong, Gillespie?" he asked, tugging his sombrero over his brows. "Sounded off 'Breakfast'? The companies along eastward 'll have to be relieved when they get back, and outposts then thrown out. The Philippinos may snipe us, after all."

"Yes, sir, 'Breakfast' sounded off. Got some for you, Colonel, in Luna's quarters. Made some rather important discoveries in overhauling his despatch box —in his skeddaddle he's left everything behind, even his sword and belt! Would you not hold back the despatches, sir, meantime. If you can come over and

breakfast, I can give you the chief points, unless you'd like to read them yourself. . . . Yes, sir, in Spanish."

"Oh, confound them! Good American is right enough for me. What has startled you?"

"Why, sir," replied the lieutenant in a low, hard-breathing voice, and stepping closer to evade the listeners, "there appears to be a brigade of Japanese regulars, close at hand. Their instructions to take action on the fourteenth. The devil only knows how they've got here!"

His commanding officer stared at him. In his effort to keep self-controlled, perspiration broke out on his bronzed face. Stiffly he handed the reins of his horse to the orderly near by.

"The Chinks are correct then. Just so, just so," he repeated in a mechanical voice, harsh, strangulated in utterance. "I reckon, it is better for me to breakfast with you. I shall recall Van Dorn and Magrudder." And Lieutenant Gillespie saluted in assent.

As they crossed the camp, the men, who had set up their kettles, and, without waiting for their coffee, were snatching a hasty breakfast, jumped up and cheered their commanding officer; and he saluted them, a very grave look on his face. Long afterwards it was recalled by a few of them, that he was in such close conversation with Lieutenant Gillespie that it was only for the moment he had paid them any attention.

Quickly, briefly, Gillespie was reporting on his discovery.

In a despatch box, found in the Philippino commander's quarters, he had come across a bundle of despatches, and copy replies thereto, between Luna and a General Hasiyoda commanding a Japanese brigade with headquarters at Calapan, a village, identi-

fied by the lieutenant as one not far distant, the letters and replies being frequently of the same date. Hasiyoda announced the arrival of a battalion, then of other units of his brigade, six battalions strong with a stiffening of artillery, force not mentioned.

The correspondence further showed, the Philippinos had asked for arms, and had been told that Hasiyoda had none to spare. They had also requested a reinforcement of Japanese regulars be sent to Luna's headquarters, but had been informed by Hasiyoda that until further supplies were received the brigade was not to be moved beyond Calapan. And to the reiterated suggestion that Luna should retire and join forces with the Japanese, had come the peremptory answer that the arrangements entered into stipulated that the Philippinos were to remain, keep the Americans occupied, and act as a screening force till, at the earliest, June 14; at which date Tokio had instructed him to take action to ensure the further landing of Japanese troops.

"It seems to me then," ejaculated the Colonel, "the little yellow devils may come down on us at any time now. What is their strength, do you reckon?"

"Three to four thousand rifles and apparently some guns," Gillespie answered at once, "for Luna wanted the guns to be sent him. Said he could do something serious if he'd the loan of a battery."

"A big handful," his commanding officer rejoined significantly. "I shall send these papers, with a brief covering note, down to Manila at once. We retire immediately the companies have breakfasted. It is folly to try conclusions with our minor force. They must be part of the Formosa garrison."

Just as they were about to enter the large hut, which

but a little earlier had been the headquarters of the Philippinos' Commander-in-Chief, the sound of galloping horses took their ears; and suddenly wheeling, both officers looked up-camp.

With streaming manes and ears set back came three riderless horses of the Mounted Volunteers, one of them bleeding heavily from a gunshot wound in his near shoulder. They dodged the men trying to catch them, and finally came to a halt on encountering some other horses that were being watered.

"That," exclaimed the Colonel, "may mean something or it may mean nothing. . . . Yes, as you say, Gillespie, it's most likely they've broken loose in the skirmishing."

Wilson unbuckled his sword on entering the hut, and instantly began looking over the captured despatches. The coffee was boiling over a lamp; biscuits, fruit, and an opened tin of meat were on a lacquered tray placed on a little table. At right angles to it stood another table of rough boards, strewn with the official documents, etc., of the insurgents. There was a camp bed, a few rugs and chairs. Opposite the door, the proclamation of *The Republic of the Philippinis* was affixed to the wall, a rifle and a machete hanging beneath it, perhaps, of a purpose.

Lieutenant Gillespie poured out a cup of coffee, and, having neatly arranged a plateful of dry biscuit and fruit, brought them to his officer.

"Get some breakfast down, sir," he besought him; "there is time enough to worry over the Japs when they come along."

"I should like to know who could eat, when a surprise like this is stuffed down his throat," rasped the Colonel. "The Governor has always stood out

for more guardacosta craft, and warned Washington the yellow niggurs were shoving their fingers into the pie. John Bull and Uncle Sam 'll make 'Geisha Chink' sick though. Very sick!"

His savage tones reached the ear of the adjutant, who had been sent for; and inquiringly he looked from one officer to the other.

"Brigade of Japanese regulars, ahead of us, to northward," said Wilson, laconic in his exasperation and surprise. "To take action on the fourteenth. To-day! They must have smuggled themselves ashore in detachments from the islands."

"I'm not at all surprised, sir," the adjutant replied with sangfroid, "you know my views about Japan. This 'll explain how the rebs are being stiffened up the valley."

"By heavens, sir!" exclaimed Gillespie, "That is just why Van Dorn and the major can't beat down their fire."

"I reckon that's so," came the grim reply, "the Nipponers are now pushing forward. We may soon be finding out if they are real grit, after all."

Rapidly the Colonel gave his orders. The Mounted Volunteers were to be recalled from their pursuit, and two picked scouts sent northward along the valley track with confidential information as to what they might expect. If Van Dorn and Magrudder, now ordered to retire, were pressed by the enemy, they would require to maintain a rearguard action. The troops now breakfasting were to fall in immediately, and the march begin of the prisoners and baggage by the direct road to the base camp. The wounded Philippinos were to be left under the Red Cross Flag; and the American casualties carried by the captured rebels.

After signing the brief despatch to General Westley, covering the startling information just acquired, Colonel Wilson went out and slowly mounted his horse. He felt anxious—disappointed. A few minutes ago, he had deemed himself high up the ladder of success, with fame falling athwart him; but now he saw the darkening shadow of defeat.

Already the troops were falling in, much to their astonishment. With four companies of the 5th Infantry, the artillery and maxims, the signal and transport and ambulance sections, there were in all 480 men. The rest of the column was still to come in. Escorted by a company of the 5th and one of the maxims, the long line of prisoners and stretcher-bearers began to move down the valley trail to the southward. The rest of the little force cleared the camp, and as the last of the baggage passed out formed fighting line facing the north. The guns, a maxim, and one company were stationed in the centre; and a company was thrown forward a little on each flank, that on the left being strengthened with an outpost on the ridge above.

On the hillside to eastward, as Van Dorn and Magrudder fell back alternately, the firing in the bush was rising into a continuous roar. And down the trail from the northward the Mounted Volunteers were retiring in some confusion—appearing and disappearing amongst the scattered trees, not in a body but strung out in twos and threes.

That disorderly retirement boded no good.

Suddenly in a clump of wood on the east ridge, well to the front, a long bright flash gleamed out, distinct even in the sunlight flooding the dark background; and the next second a shell burst in the deserted camp,

throwing up a shower of earth and stones and shattered shrubs. The U.S.A. troops now lying down in shelter along their line stared in amazement.

Captain Mahon forthwith wheeled his guns into action, but even as he did so another shell exploded in front of them, and two of his gunners fell. One of them rose again and staggered back, leaning on a comrade, the blood running in a flood down his blasted features. Already two other numbers had sprung forward and taken their posts.

"Looks as if the Japs are coming on the scene faster than we surmised," said Colonel Wilson to his adjutant. "You look to the retirement of our left. I'll gather the companies on the right. Van Dorn and the Major may have their hands full. Then we retire by alternate wings." And he rode fast away towards the fighting line now coming down from the eastward bush.

His cavalry came into the lines in twos and threes; and the first to arrive reported that they had run into a line of khaki-clad 'midgets,' who had shot down most of them in a very few minutes.

Though only a few of the officers had been informed by Colonel Wilson of the vicinity of the Japanese, everywhere along the line his troops now knew they were no longer in contact with badly led insurgents but with Japanese regulars. In that mysterious way in which rumours spread, the men told each other they were outnumbered. Yet there was nothing in their bearing to show that the situation had changed from easy victory to overwhelming danger.

CHAPTER IV

HONOUR TO THE BRAVE

UNDER the blazing sun, the tired Americans pulled themselves together; and with keen interest watched the unequal duel between their guns and the Japanese battery. The enemy's advance had also showed themselves on the edge of the bush, and they were no irregular crowd of rebels, but, as conjectured, a well-ordered skirmishing line of little men in khaki. Mahon's guns belched shrapnel amongst them, and they scattered into shelter.

§ I

Doggedly the Americans were falling back, taking advantage of such cover as the irregularities of the ground afforded, to turn and check the pursuit. Their commanding officer had dismounted, and gained the centre of the retiring line. It was a wholly different affair from the pleasant success of that early morning, when he could ride about, leaving the execution of his orders to subordinates. He felt he must show himself where the danger was greatest. But his men needed no encouragement; steadily and coolly, just as if it were a field day, they turned to fire, then moved away with a long easy swinging gait.

Here and there a man suddenly stopped, staggered and tumbled to the ground, stark dead. A wounded Missourian fell near the Colonel, and two of his comrades slung their rifles, and prepared to lift him.

"No, boys, no," Wilson ordered, "you mustn't do it. No carrying the wounded. That's my order. Give first-aid and leave him."

The man looked up, anger, fear, supplication charging his dirty brown face, on which the sweat and viscid blood stood in great blobs.

"Very sorry. God knows that," the Colonel said to him, "but you'll be safe enough. No Tagal savages but Jap regulars in action against us now. Ye'll be looked after by them. If we try to carry wounded, every shot that hits will put three or four of us out of action. See? If I myself drop I'll insist on being left lying where I fall."

"All right, Colonel," replied the wounded man, breathing hard through his teeth, "ef it can't be helped, it can't! 'Tain't much of a mischief, an' I can bandage it. Ef the yelly niggurs chew me up in mistake, well, 'tis done an' can't be undone. Here, take my ca'tridges anyhow. S'long, Colonel. . . ."

The retirement now became more rapid, but still the men held steadily together.

Over the level ground, past the camp and up the long slope, the companies retired along the line of that morning's advance, pelted with shells from the Japanese battery now on the east ridge. Van Dorn fell dead under a bursting shrapnel. Mahon, though severely wounded in the shoulder, still commanded his guns, but his men suffered so terribly under the incessant fire that reliefs had to be drawn from the infantry.

Riker had ceased to be a non-combatant, and

was running to and fro carrying the long brass-encased ammunition from the mules to the guns.

"I'm no gunner whatever, not I, Captain," he had panted to Mahon, "but any fool can do this."

At last Colonel Wilson got his thinned forces gathered together on the ridge. But the enemy, well aware they could afford losses better than the Americans, poured up recklessly to the attack. General Hasiyoda was impatient to complete the destruction of the 'white' soldiers. He too had his ambition!—The first victory of the long-looked-for war.

Along the west ridge came a splutter of fire from his rifles, advancing through the bush against the American flank; and up from the valley surged the long lines of two of his battalions pressing their advance home. The steady withering fire of the United States troops, reinforced by their artillery, held them back. Theirs was no generation of Samurai. The brunt of the attack proceeded from the east ridge, where the six Japanese Q.F. guns were spouting shell that burst not in the air but on the ground, blowing men to atoms or disabling them with wounds caused by the innumerable fragments of red-hot steel.

"We are in for something more than a tussle," Colonel Wilson said to Gillespie, who was bandaging his officer's right hand, torn badly by shell splinter, "but we'll give 'em a good fight. We must get a request through to Bakolor for reinforcements from Manila. I can't stop 'em now; the Japs will sweep the upper districts clean. You will pick the freshest of the horses, lieutenant, and get the wireless at Bakolor. Tell the Commander-in-Chief the whole story. Tell him, we all did our best. Did the job we came to do. But, just think—a Jap brigade behind Luna's crowd.

". . . Yes, sir, these are my orders. You go . . . And, ah, . . . Gillespie . . . take this," thrusting that commonplace thing, a letter, extracted from his breast-pocket into the lieutenant's hand. "In case . . . you know."

The lieutenant did not salute but grasped his officer's hand. When he replied, perhaps there was more tremor in his excited tones than in the Colonel's.

"Please God, sir, there is no need to post this letter to Mrs. Wilson. If any relief can be brought up I'll bring it. You can't miss the trail we made coming up, and I shall come back the same way with every man the General can spare. If you entrench lower down, there's plenty water around, and the horses and mules can be knocked down for rations."

"Not us but the guns 'll soon be starved," came the rejoinder. "Slip away quietly. . . . Yes, at once, Gillespie."

The eyes of both officers met, and with grim significance the officer commanding returned his subaltern's salute.

Just then, to the left of them, an infantry-man, who had been firing hotly from behind a little knuckle of ground was disembowelled by bursting shell, and fell in a tattered red heap. Wilson darted to him, and the first-aids ran up, crouching low to evade the hail of spurting bullets and shell-slivers.

Gillespie, heavy at heart, slipped to the rear, and swung himself into the saddle.

As he struck the trail and coaxed the horse into a long loping canter it seemed to him the crash and fury of the engagement suddenly heightened.

§ 2

The little force of Americans, now united, retired over the ridge, escaping for awhile the deluge of explosives from the battery, and gaining a partial screen in the belts of bush. The battalions of the left attack gained the abandoned crest with a ringing 'Banzai! banzai!' Their comrades, who were advancing along the ridge, deployed through the jungle using their numbers to encircle the little band opposed to them. The quickfirers were silent, the Japanese having loaded them up on the gun mules that now were making their way across the valley.

It was 10 a.m. The sun had risen high, and was shining with fierce heat in a cloudless sky.

On the high ground there was no water; and the Americans with water bottles emptied, and hot with the exertions of the fight, felt the torment of intense thirst; and, on the tension slackening for a little, a sudden and overpowering weariness of mind and body. Most of the medical staff had remained with the wounded on the field and in the camp. There were only a junior surgeon and a couple of ambulance men with the column, now reduced to a little more than half its strength, many of the officers and men being wounded though still able to march and fight.

The surgeon spoke to Wilson almost in a whisper.

"It's my duty to tell you, sir, that unless we move down to one of the streams pretty quick a large number of the men will collapse. It's the question of sunstroke, Colonel."

"Water, half-a-mile downhill. We'll be there in a few minutes, doctor, then we can get a drink all round and fill up the bottles."

The enemy were now mostly invisible, but their bullets, fired at random, came ripping through the bush. Suddenly two men staggered and fell; they lay with open gasping mouths and staring eyes. The surgeon's forecast had been verified; and when there is one case of sunstroke others follow as if it were a pestilence; for the sight of one collapse diminishes the nerve power of resistance in sorely tried men.

But there was the water, trickling and gurgling down its narrow channel, marked by a dense growth of tropical weeds on either side.

And now came the triumph of discipline. There was no rush to the water. The men, as they passed, with little delay filled their bottles and drank; they dipped both hands in the cool stream, and threw the water in their faces. All seemed life and energy again.

But, while they drank, the enemy's guns from some unseen spot opened out the range.

One crashing shower of shrapnel fell at the crossing of the stream, where Wilson stood holding the bridle of his horse while it drank. The horse rolled over, kicking and plunging and splashing the water. The Colonel's hat fell off and floated on the stream; he threw up his hands, and collapsed. His adjutant and another rushed to him. There was blood on his forehead, and on the torn shoulder of his tunic.

Before the doctor could come up he had recovered himself.

"Tell Magrudder to keep moving," he said, "he is senior officer now. The doctor will patch me up."

The surgeon looked grave—a serious wound in the head and another in the left shoulder were no trifles at such a time. He set to work to do what he could,

the wounded officer having been moved across the stream into the shade.

There was a fresh burst of firing, and now it came from the actual front of the advance. Mahon's guns rang out in the bush beyond the stream and the maxim clattered out again. The adjutant, who had run forward, now came back. Wilson lay on the ground deadly pale. The surgeon had bandaged his head, and was now cutting away part of his tunic and shirt, to examine the other wound.

"How are things going, Marker?"

"They have tried to head us off and rush us in front, but the boys have held them, sir. Mahon is plugging shell into them to clear the way."

The Colonel set his lips, as the surgeon with a pair of forceps drew something from the wound, and then hurriedly plugged it with lint.

"Has Mahon much shell left?"

"Not more than a dozen and a few rounds of case, four to each gun, and the cartridges are very short."

"It can't last, now that we're headed off, and the men are getting dead beat. What does that mean?"

The fire was dying down rapidly. Then a bugle sounded 'Cease fire.'

"Magrudder is not surrendering?" asked the Colonel, trying to raise himself. "Tell him, though I'm down, I command still. We can have no surrender."

"Why has the firing ceased?" he inquired a little later in a fretful, angered voice of the first-aid in attendance, fanning him to keep away the flies. "Find out at once. Are the Japs retiring?"

"The captain is coming back, sir, an' Major Magrudder with him."

The two officers came striding through the bush.

In the strange silence one could hear the rustle of their boots in the weeds and tangled grass. Both looked very grave.

"Sorry you're hit, Colonel, but you'll be all right again, sure," were the Major's first words.

Wilson looked up very calmly, and spoke deliberately.

"No, Major, my time is nearly out. But that's of no account just now. What is happening? I'm in command yet, you know."

"Of course, Colonel, of course," answered Magrudder. "The Japs have sent a flag of truce, that's why we've ceased fire. Take my word, Colonel, I'd have told them to go to blazes with their white rag, but we have hardly a cartridge left. It seems they're all round us, with four of their guns on the trail in front. The officer that brought the flag said we might verify what he said if we liked. He says General Hasiyoda has no liking to destroy men who have put up such a good fight."

"And he wants surrender?"

"Well, sir, he offers terms. To come down to bedrock—he's got us in the hollow of his hand. But here's his offer. We hand over our guns, but men and officers march off down to the railway and keep all arms and colours; and we see that all the prisoners taken this morning are sent back in exchange."

"What do you say, Magrudder?"

"The terms are good. But I would rather fight to the last bullet and the last man."

"Well, Magrudder, we'll take the terms. It's no sense getting the boys killed off because we don't like parleying with the Jap. I said I was in command. I'd have left it all to you, Magrudder, if there was a chance of getting through, or any credit to be won,

but I saw it was coming to this, and my name, not yours, goes on the surrender. I suppose that's what they will call it, and right enough. Draw up a short note of it with the Jap, and on them sending in an officer of rank, I'll sign. It's my order. You're clear of it. Marker, you will make that plain. Just try to get them to leave Mahon his guns, but don't waste time over it. Don't waste time, for I must sign. Tell Westley, I did my best."

"No, sir, you don't sign," said the Major, "let me settle and sign this damned paper. All went well while you were fit. I'll let them know it."

"No, Magrudder! . . . My last order. . . . I sign."

And thus it was the unequal fight ended.

The men who had thought themselves doomed to die, and were grimly resolved to die fighting, learned that through the generosity of the hostile general and the unselfish decision of their own dying leader they were to live as free men for the old Flag.

The terms were signed, and the weary troops camped till next day where the fight had ended.

American and Japanese officers met, and exchanged impressions. Riker was able to report to the Associated Press that 'the Jap General is not sorry we had knocked the fight out of Luna's crowd.' It was noticed that the Japanese took care that no Philippinos were allowed to approach the American bivouac!

Colonel Wilson had maintained his energies till it all was arranged, and then, conscious he had done his best, he seemed to allow his vitality to flag and sink.

In the calm of the tropical night, he died, and next morning the remnant of his command paid the last honours by his grave. His bugler sounded the "Last Post," and his guns fired their last shots in the salute,

and the Japanese cannon gravely joining in awoke further echoes along the hills.

Then the march began, down to Bakolor.

A Japanese staff officer rode alongside Major Magrudder, at the head of the little column; and as it passed the victors their troops presented arms. It was then the Japanese could mark that there were very few men in the American ranks who did not bear the marks of the fighting.

Yes! Civilization in the twentieth century has robbed war of a little of its primal barbarity.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK

THE SIXTH BOOK

CHAPTER I

THE WHIRLIGIG OF CHANGE

IN June 1920, Time and Destiny before many days were to verify an utterance of Mr. Marlborough's that statesmanship is not mere consistency of direction of affairs, but is in a state of flux and has to be adapted to the actual exigencies of the times. In the third week of June he was to find himself at the head of a Coalition Government, with most of the Pacificist Party embittered in opposition. And Britain was to discover that, impaired as her military strength was through her ardent pursuit of the things of peace, out of that which had so weakened her was to come forth victory.

§ 1

To the prophets of misfortune who had predicted the dark soldiers of Britain would turn upon her in the hostilities arising out of Japan posing as the Champion of Asiatic races against the white man, there was coming a surprise even greater than that occasioned by the loyalty of the Egyptian troops—a surprise bringing home to sceptics that 'Justice prevails in the end.'

India, to whom Britain has given of her best and

noblest—India, owing security of life and property, the spread and growth of education, the infinitely slow but sure progress in her path amongst the nations, all to her former taskmaster—India was now giving spontaneous tribute to the integrity and effectiveness of England's intentions.

The Sydney catastrophe, as indicated in previous pages, had proved to be the signal for the disaffected Bengalis and other natives to bring to a head their public agitation against the English Raj.

Though the grant of local self-government had more than satisfied all the moderate and most influential members of the native communities, it was entirely different as regards the numerous agitators (the majority of whom had studied at the Japanese Universities, and were under the influence of the strong anti-British propagandists of the Monto sect). They had now to recognize that the acceptance of concessions was bringing to an end their easy and lucrative vocation. It was the same, too, with the innumerable candidates for government posts, and for that public recognition which is the breath of life to the blatant Baboo. These two parties of irreconcilables combining their activities had entered on a fresh crusade for independence, shown in their agitation through their Representative Chambers for control over all their civil service, magistracy and police.

'Asia for Asiatics' . . . 'Bengal for the Bengalis.'

The disorders, breaking out with startling rapidity as already chronicled, called for every effort on the part of the British garrison to maintain law and order; the Viceroy, the Marquis of Tweeddale, had been forced to appeal urgently for reinforcements. But in the Indian eruption of 1920, which is now sketched

but broadly, there are no details pointing to that tragic ineptitude, cowardice, indecision, which in the Indian Mutiny palsied English officers while their fellow-countrymen and women were being baited, spit upon bayonets and hewn to pieces before their very eyes. With a relentless and methodical hand were the military and civil authorities now crushing disorder and sedition. Not Hewitt and Wilson, but Nicholson, Edwardes and Campbell were the figures now rising up from the past.

Yet, crippled by the weakness of the British forces, that had been cut down in 1917 to two-thirds their former strength, and enfeebled through the very extent of the disaffection to be dealt with, the British Raj might have had to encounter disaster and the pandemonium of 1857 anew, if India's own princes had not of their own accord set about stamping out the rising perils. Loyally the rajahs supported the Government in their efforts to repress the disturbances throughout Bengal, the North-West Provinces, Oude, and the Punjaub, where were the centres of active disaffection.

By means of the local noblemen and landowners, stringent measures were enforced against the political missionaries or so-called Sadhus and religious mendicants now travelling everywhere, by road, railway, and steamer. Just as in 1857 the fakirs and ash-marked soothsayers had spread sedition and insurrection, so these Sadhus, emboldened by the latitude given in 1907–8 and later years were again industriously fomenting outrages wherever they went; their Bengali custom of carrying pots of ghi on their heads, and their cleanliness and general bearing showing they had adopted the yellow garment merely as a disguise.

Throughout Eastern Bengal they had been proving

especially obnoxious, not only in their underground propaganda, but by resuscitating the native organization of 'National Volunteers' and the influence of the notorious 'Bande Mataram' badge. Co-operating with the Swadeshi Baboos, the agitators had in many places coerced the local native police into submission and procured an utter disregard for the authority of the Feringhi. Yet as the council of Rajahs wisely pointed out to the Central Government, it was futile for true patriots to range themselves on the side of law and order when the Government itself tacitly abetted its own embarrassments by allowing, just as in 1907–8, so many of its Bengali employees, not only to assist in the propagation of disloyalty by openly subscribing to such funds as were used to that end, but even to utilize their authority to put pressure on those who remained loyal —just as happened in the first Swadeshi movement.

In truth, the native rulers of the Indian states were making use of that practical good sense which the recalcitrants had denied them.

India has tempted the greed of almost every strong race in Europe and Asia. To the drums and trampling of the centuries, dynasty after dynasty, Persian, Afghan Aryan and Mogul, has swept through the unresisting land so abundant in riches and fertility. Only through England, with Her unbending application of justice and Her relentless activity in military might, has India's peace been established.

Dissensions and animosity between the different classes and communities, with talk of revolt and the driving of the Feringhi to the sea, evoked sinister visions to the clearer-sighted native statesmen. To the west, Persia a hotbed of insurrection ; to the north and north-west, Afghanistan already menacing in inexplic-

able activity along the frontier, and Russia looming up behind, mighty, still greedy of empire as of old: but, above all, out of the north-east and eastward where colossal China now brooded sullenly in the pride of her new-grown military and political strength, dwarfing the Shadow of Japan;—from these quarters might stalk the spectres of war upon India, that complex mass of diverse and still inimical nations.

For many years yet, the Shield of Britannia must cover the lands of Ind.

§ 2

It was, then, the reassuring news from India and Egypt—toward which centre of harassment the contingent of 8,000 militia of the South African Commonwealth was now being swiftly conveyed by the Cape-to-Cairo Railway—that, together with the first successes of the French—Mirecourt and Valfroicourt—went further to steady the money market than even the important steps taken by the Coalition Cabinet at their first meeting.

The Government agreed to meet all losses incurred through bombardment by payment out of the public funds, under certain equitable conditions. The Bank Charter Act was suspended to provide for a free issue of notes which the Exchequer guaranteed; and at the same time the banks were informed that those of them showing they were normally in a sound position would be assisted as necessitated by the Bank of England, to which the national credit was now pledged in support. Also, in order to provide delay to save financial houses and others from ruin a ten days' moratorium was announced for all bills falling due between June 15 and June 25.

For some weeks, however, gold was at a premium, for the first time in the memory of living men. Postal orders for ten shillings and a pound, with a special stamp cancelling the two months' limit, circulated instead of half-sovereigns and sovereigns for a considerable time even after hostilities had been stopped. That the gold reserve of Great Britain sank to a very perilous minimum was indubitably due to the scared condition of Wall Street and banking circles throughout the United States of America.

Already the political complications resulting from the extension of hostilities were giving rise to untoward and extraordinary developments in the affairs of that prodigious Republic.

§ 3

No mere visionary's views had prompted Senator Stellman, assisted by a few friends, to establish the *Suffrage* in furtherance of the Anglo-Saxon League, to which international force many patriotic Americans now looked for safety, in steadying the Republic's uncertain orbit. Within She was weakened by inter-State dissensions, and abroad She was menaced by complications consequent on her departure from the traditional sphere of American political interests.

The enterprise and vigour shown in the direction of her affairs by President Roosevelt during his last term as Head of the Republic had subsequently proved disastrous, not only to the careers of several of his successors taking after his bent though lacking the qualities of moral earnestness and popular appeal so distinctive of Washington Minor—but also to the United States Themselves.

'Themselves'?

No longer were the States a single voiced, corporate unity. No longer did They represent in one cohered and terribly formidable body the 'Greatest Power on Earth.' That, the centrifugal force of the self-assertive States was driving asunder. The progress of civilization with its corresponding events has far exceeded the limits of the United States Constitution as it was framed by its eighteenth century founders. Its machinery creaks and jars under the drive and strain of forces which they had never even imagined.

When the hostilities of 1920 and the Great Awakening burst on the people of the United States, they were intensely absorbed in their domestic affairs, even more than in the years of the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War. State Legislatures and the Congress at Washington alike were now passing through tempestuous sessions.

The continued growth of wealth and inordinate luxury—inordinate misery, too—the combination of large material forces still menacing the freedom and interests of the individual, who now saw the barriers of his defence only in the socialistic and labour parties; the increasing inability of the Country to assimilate the hordes of alien emigrants still pouring into Her from Continental Europe—no longer to become Americanized, but through the potentiality of their great communities now retaining most of their racial characteristics, the 'American' nationality being superimposed thereon by means of $50 in pocket and other ten for the price of naturalization papers;—all these had given rise to much experimental legislation which occasioned angry and protracted discussion throughout the country.

Above all, however, it was the insistence on extreme State rights, rendering it difficult for the Federal Government to coerce the recalcitrant members, that was dissipating America's energy as a sovereign nation. This was especially the case in the Pacific States. There the controversy over Asiatic, in particular Japanese labour and settlers, was dealing severe blows at the framework of the antiquated Constitution.

Just as Mr. Marlborough had enunciated long ago, politics and statecraft are not fixed quantities, and have to be adapted to the actual exigencies of the times.

George Washington and the framers of the United States Constitution had not had to consider the Asiatic Peril; or, the very obvious dangers arising from communities of those who, though alien to true American traditions, sentiments and culture—and conforming only to the grosser traits, the swagger of American speech and manners, the craze for riches, and the popular mistake of bigness for greatness—yet swayed the Senates of their respective States.

Even as far back as 1907, New York, the metropolis of the United States, possessed within her boundaries city populations of every nationality save her own, not a single section of her inhabitants being predominatingly American by birth and education.

For years American statesmen had viewed with complacency the full stream of a full-grown and ready-made population flowing unceasingly into their country. They had taken no thought to the after effects and the deterioration of such traditions and racial characteristics as their Anglo-Saxon forefathers had endowed them with against the assaults of Fortune.

And now in June, 1920, though the Pacific Slope and the majority of the eastern seaboard States clamoured

for an alliance with Britain, the negative attitude of the more aggressive Democratic labour groups—reconciled for the time being in their hatred of militarism and fears of new entanglements in foreign affairs—and, paramountly, the vehement and vindictive opposition of the 'German' States, Missouri, New Jersey, Wisconsin and others, were fettering the initiative of the Federal Government.

§ 4

These then are the cardinal points defining the position taken by the United States of America in the war of 1920:—

(1) To preserve neutrality with Germany, and avoid any appearance of interference in the affairs of Europe further than insistence on the performance of the duties of belligerents as agreed by the successive Peace Conventions.

(2) To prosecute hostilities against Japan, and at all costs to maintain sovereignty over the Philippines and the freedom of the Pacific.

(3) To act generally in consort with Great Britain for this end, yet withal preserving absolute independence of action and of naval operations throughout the Pacific.

In truth, Washington was compelled to steer this middle course to avoid internal strife and threatened bloodshed.

What however was not to be disclosed for many years is that England's knowledge of Germany's collusion with Japan emanated from the Government of the United States. The heart of 'Brother Jonathan' rang true. Even so then, a few days later,

the ties of blood and kinship were to prove irresistible in the hour of hostilities.

It was Admiral Leary, Commander-in-Chief of the first U.S.A. Pacific battle-fleet, who at the last minute was to assert the domination of the Anglo-Saxon Race.

§ 5

Not till the late afternoon of June 22, however, were the proofs, that had been referred to so dramatically, so passionately, by the British Prime Minister in his famous speech to the Commons on June 13, at last made known to the world at large.

Simultaneously with the communication of them to the Press, His Majesty's Government gave them out in a Circular Note to the Powers; and they were also to be found in the White-Book issued to the two Houses of Parliament. In its pages all the intrigues are irrefutably demonstrated. But, as this volume is not immediately concerned with the intricate details of the inner trend of the world politics and statecraft leading up to and evolving from the Great War of 1920, the following brief statement is indicative enough of the hollowness of the international concord, so eloquently vouched for by Mr. Marlborough in his speech opening the Peace Conference.

§ 6

Early in June it had been made plain to the British Government through the offices of a friendly Great Power, ultimately disclosed as the United States, that Germany and Japan were in tacit agreement to support each other if involved in hostilities with England.

Facts sent home a few days later by the British ambassadors to several foreign Powers substantially bore out the information.

Now, though England had fulfilled the terms of her temporary lease of Wei-hai-Wei, and had returned that base to China, Germany yet retained Kaio-Chau. Here, even by 1907, she had built a city but little inferior to that constructed by Russia at Dalny so opportunely for the Japanese occupation.

Germany's network of railroads, now spreading throughout the Shan-tung Province and threading the territory to westward, through Ho-nan and Shan-si—her years of energetic striving and great expenditure of life and money there in the prosecution of her commercial and industrial interests—her determination to maintain a naval station in the Eastern Seas in 'protection' of her shipping interests (the importance of which she much exaggerated by means of an ingenious system of port registration), and, above all, her unswerving aim to possess a great trading centre with China directly under her own control, had induced her not to abandon her purpose of effecting a permanent footing in the Shan-tung Province.

Through the growing antagonistic attitude of China the situation had become delicate towards the end of 1919. It might have all too easily grown acute but for the adroit intermediary standing taken by Japan. That this was her bait for securing German help in the event of hostilities breaking out against Great Britain, was indubitably proved to be the case by the information furnished through Washington, and fully confirmed by means of underground diplomatic channels. The evidence, published in black-and-white by Britain could not be impugned.

And the Grand Delusion entertained by both Allies that war was bursting over England alone? Ah! It had so come that, into the pit dug by themselves, there now were fallen both the illusive East and the evasive West.

CHAPTER II

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

IN the deepening dusk of June 23, the news kiosk at the head of Parliament Street, opposite Scotland Yard, took the eye instantly. It stood out like a miniature lighthouse with its brilliantly-illumed transparencies giving the contents of the news-bills in great staring white letters.

THE FIGHTING IN MID-AIR.

TERRIBLE SCENES.

OUR ALLY IMPREGNABLE BEFORE VALLEROY.

FRENCH MASSING FOR THE ATTACK.

KAISER AT THE FRONT.

HOW HOLLAND SPOILS THE ENEMIES' INTRIGUES.

These catchlines, in particular, attracted the attention of Lesley Savill as, accompanied by his father, he had turned out of Downing Street into Whitehall on his way to the House of Commons, Parliament having resumed its interrupted session.

"What's that about Holland, Lesley?" asked Mr. Savill. "I can't see so well as I used to."

"'How Holland Spoils the Enemies' Intrigues,' dad. The good old P.M.G. has hit the mark as usual: that's

just the proper heading for the affair. It might as well have also put, 'How the United States have upset Germany's calculations'—even with this absurd neutrality of theirs. Hullo! 'Hostile warships off the North Foreland.' Coming rather near, eh, father! We should soon be getting news of naval fighting out East; there is an 'inside' rumour the Japs have a squadron coming down on Sydney, to wipe out old scores . . . . Oh, there's a taximeter coming this way, father."

Mr. Savill motioned to the electric-cab slowly plying Charing Cross-ward, to draw in on the curb; then he looked at the throngs crowding the pavement before the State Offices. In especial did his eye dwell on the crowd that surged before the busy entrance of the Admiralty Buildings, away up the thoroughfare.

"Yes, we should be soon getting news of what the Navy is doing, all round," he replied, his sober tones contrasting so significantly with the light exuberant ones of his youngest born. "Since I had that letter from James, which I sent on to you, so expressive of his gladness on being re-appointed to G submarines, even as a subordinate to Captain Graves, I have not heard from him. Poor Jim, drawing attention to the authorities' persistent slackness in submarine matters has cost him dear, and come too late."

"Slackness, dad, slackness," Lesley repeated, "is the peculiar characteristic of Britons. Oh, I admit it. One sees many things in a different light now. But, anyhow, we'll pull through. . . . Look at that char-a-banc blocking your cab—cutting clean in before it—hang it! Oh! did you read Winnie's leader in the *Suffrage* this afternoon, on Japan and Germany against us. It is 'inspired,' a little: I don't suppose

the confidential documents 'll ever see print. . . . Japan has really had as little notion Germany was intending to take advantage of the embroglio to annex Holland, as Germany has had that Japan was playing her off against the States—to no end! The situation, if it hadn't involved war, would seem exceeding farcical. Each fooling the other."

Not even the tremendous all-pervading hum of London traffic could disguise the savageness and cynicism that, now vibrant in Lesley's voice, caused his father to look anxiously at him.

"Don't let the chicanery and beastliness of all this lying diplomacy blunt your better feelings, Lesley," came his rejoinder as both of them stepped toward the curb where Mr. Savill's vehicle was at last drawing up. "Come down to-night as I want you, and have a bite of supper with me; then drive back to town in the cool of the early morning, just as you used to. Dreischer and Edie are coming with me now, and, by-the-bye, Miss Stellman as well—at least, I hope so. The two girls 'll be staying for some days."

Under his father's suddenly interested, if somewhat quizzical look, Lesley's eyes fell. It occurred to him, Miss Stellman had been put forward as a kind of inducement, eventuating in his presence at Winsted Hall that night.

This idea came to him with a surprising effect. It stirred in him an acuter perception that a new motive had taken possession of his life. It evoked in him a pleasurable acquiescence in his father's kindly little trick to secure him that evening. Yet the next moment he sharply chid himself; felt piqued that his parent should deem this new element in his life was more persuasive than his affection for him; and with his

right hand he gave a little flourish with his gloves, indicative of surprise and negation.

"Ah. . . . Edie and her clan going down to-night. . . Doesn't matter to me, dad, if they do; I'd sooner see you by yourself. My getting away, though, depends on Mr. Marlborough's arrangements. Sorry I can't come with you now—you know how I like being with you. . . . Perhaps home, then, about eleven-fifty for an hour or two. Adios, meantime. . . . Yes, dad, I will try and get down. . . ."

But as events were so soon to demonstrate, if Lesley had not permitted himself the pleasure of going down to Winsted Hall that evening, in the political history of The Great Awakening there would not have had to be chronicled that far-reaching and sudden Movement on June 30—a change which came as unexpectedly as the cause of it was startling.

§ 1

"What did you say, Savill?—do I need you after ten, to-night? No, not so far as I am aware, unless the Australian despatches come in over the cables; and, then, decoding them will occupy the Colonial Office for an hour or two. . . . Take these notes, here—my answers to-morrow in Committee on Affairs—and give them to Mr. Spencer for incorporation of to-night's data. No startling news from Sydney, again, I hope."

Savill stepped nearer Mr. Marlborough, who, white-faced and jaded, was leaning back into the depths of the capacious writing-chair in his private room in the House; and took the indicated papers that were lying on the Premier's pad.

"I thought of going down to Winsted, sir, for an

hour or two," he ventured to say in explanation, his voice lowered consequent on the neighbourhood of Sir Francis Smythe, who, with his hands characteristically thrust into his waistcoat pockets was rapidly pacing up and down the room close by. "My father was rather pressing me, this afternoon, when in town."

"Mr. Savill in town! I'd have been very glad to have seen him for a few minutes," Mr. Marlborough said, mopping his hot, perspiring face, his eyes straying restlessly to the windows that stood open to the coolness of the night; "the doyen of our oldest county families, yet so alive and active to all the needs of our times. Sir Francis, you remember Mr. Savill? It was he gave that most invaluable material to the Royal Commissions on Afforestation and Land Settlement."

"I do, and very well, too," answered the Foreign Secretary, coming to a stand, and turning his keen cold eyes on Mr. Marlborough's secretary. "The ideal Englishman in ideal English surroundings. One of the most adequate symbols of England I have ever encountered. One cannot easily forget him."

"Ah, Winsted so fresh and green," commented Mr. Marlborough, a note of longing creeping into his voice. "God knows what I'd give for a breath of pure country air there, or at Pewsey Chase."

As the secretary reached the door, notes in hand, the Premier's voice brought him up sharp.

"When will you be back, Savill? Early morning?"

"Yes, sir, between four and five. I am motoring, myself."

"Why, then, why, then—I will come with you. The run will do me good, I hope. . . . Do you

know, Sir Francis, I have not slept two continuous hours for the last fortnight."

Lesley had wheeled on his heel, as also had Sir Francis. Amazement, bewilderment—nay, the very audacity of such a proposition—took the secretary's breath away; and in silence he glanced at both Ministers.

Sir Francis had read his face.

"Mr. Savill thinks it sheer dereliction of duty," said he, in that voice of his that could make at times even a soft word create wrath; and giving a little shrug with his thin shoulders. "Perhaps I think so, too; though I also think a few hours in the country would do you more good than a dozen bottles of your worthy physician, Sir Douglas Maclagan's prescription. . . . One never knows at present what crisis the next hour may bring forth. A very serious business, too, if you were out of town. . . . The public outcry, tremendous. . . ."

"It will be only for a few hours," rejoined the Premier in a stubborn, self-decided voice, "and no one need ever know. It will give me a little relief from this terrible treadmill. I have been longing these last few weeks for the peaceful green country, that is really our England, till it has become a maddening nostalgia. . . . You know, Sir Francis?"

"Yes! ah, I know," came the response; and over the long, high-cheeked profile that Savill saw, with its pallid complexion, smoothly-brushed black hair, and short upper-lip, there passed a shade of deep tenderness. Something of a revelation in the character of the great Leader whose years of brilliant invective and merciless dissection of men and matters had obscured his truer and finer qualities from the Public's ken.

"Yes, I know," he repeated slowly, looking before

him, out into the night, as if he were projecting himself over the river and Southwark, far over the miles of London brick and mortar and surrounding garden cities, into the dewy woods and glades, the fragrant meadows and cornfields and rich lushy leas. . . . "That is England . . . our home . . . our very strength —the country. He was a wise man that kissed Her soil."

"I believe you even yet would bear arms, if necessary, Sir Francis," Mr. Marlborough jerked out, half in admiration, half in dissent as he rose to his feet. "Once I've looked into the House, I'll go over to the Colonial Office with you. Mr. Savill, kindly ring them up."

Nodding in answer, Sir Francis Smythe smiled enigmatically at the Premier. One wonders what he was thinking?

§ 2

At 10.42 that evening, when Savill slowed down his automobile in the Mall, opposite the Prime Minister's garden, Mr. Marlborough stepped quickly out of the semi-darkness beneath the elm close by. Pulling down the brim of his motor-cap the better to conceal his face in the garish light from the electric standard not far away, he leapt into the front seat with an air of eagerness and gaiety that took his quaking secretary by storm.

"The goggles, sir, the goggles. Quick," he cried in an undertone. "Here comes the First Lord of the Admiralty in a great hurry . . . just about to pass." And as Lesley with a little twist of his steering gear dexterously wheeled the car, and presented their backs

to the approaching Ministers, he heard the Premier deliberately chuckle. Weeks after, he recalled it.

"We've dodged them all right. Yes, thanks, pass along the Strand and Fleet Street," he replied to Savill's query; "I want to have a glimpse at outside life again. This is glorious—just like escape from prison! Oh, Savill, drive round by Storey Gate, and give me a look at Whitehall. Leisurely, though, leisurely. I am not afraid of being recognized: these goggles adequately mask me."

Slowly and in some trepidation Savill rounded into Parliament Street from Westminster. He thanked the gods there was no prospect of a block on the up side along Whitehall. It struck him, too, the night traffic was lighter than usual; the groups of onlookers and others now fringing the entrances of the great Offices had thinned away to twos and threes. Relaxing his vigilance for a second he stole a glance at Mr. Marlborough, sitting beside him, erect, and wrapped in a military cloak.

Behind the bulging goggles, the Premier's eyes were roving over the well-known scene. As the mouth of Downing Street was slowly passed, he turned his head as if straining for a last look; then lingeringly he gazed at the Offices of State as in splendid succession they lined the thoroughfare.

"One does get a wonderfully impressive sense of it all," he observed to his companion.

He turned his head again as if to take another and a farewell look, then averting his eyes he sighed heavily. It was as if he heard upon his inner ear the voices of Fate suddenly ringing bitter and foreboding.

"Allons! Allons, mon ami! It is to the country we go," he cried hastily, unconsciously emphasizing

'country.' "Make speed now. We have no time to lose."

Ah, words so full of truth.

Only once again did Savill hear the old Marlborough speak forth, the Marlborough whom he thought he knew so well. It was as they were going down Fleet Street. A slight block opposite the *Courant* Offices caused Savill to reduce speed; and they had ample time to peruse the journal's transparencies wherein flared in great yellow letters its prominent news-lines :—

COHESION LACKING IN COALITION CABINET.

PACIFICIST PREMIER IMPOSSIBLE.

"What lies, what absolutely foolish lies!" exclaimed Mr. Marlborough with that caustic impatient intonation he had made his own; and, too, in such an impulse of contempt as caused many of the straggling group lining the pavement before the window to turn round and stare inquisitively at him.

Smothering an exclamation of dismay and annoyance at the Premier's indiscretion, Savill gave a thrust to his speed pedal; and before any recognition was possible the automobile had sprung forward, narrowly missing a collision with a huge motor-dray and the string of vehicles filtering westward towards the Strand.

§ 3

Not till they were clear of the many miles of London city and suburbs, and had raced through the most easterly of the far-famed 'garden cities,' past Brentwood, did the full weight of his responsibility suddenly

break upon Savill; till then his mind had been strenuously occupied in driving the sixty-horse-power electric car through the streams and eddies of night traffic in the metropolis and with the intricacies of his route along the leagues of suburbia. He cast an anxious eye at Mr. Marlborough. With his broad shoulders slightly hunched together against the strong current of air created by the car, and his gloved hands tightly clasped in the lap of the leather apron, the Premier appeared to be either dozing or staring intently ahead.

There came to his secretary a hazy idea of the tremendous commotion throughout the Country if any disaster overtook Mr. Marlborough in this dash of his for 'plein air'—a dash which, if consonant enough with democratic notions regarding the freedom of the Ministerial Head of the State was hardly in keeping with the hitherto inviolate traditions. Instinctively Lesley took a firmer grip of the steering wheel; he strained his hearing to detect the slightest change in the subdued hum of the delicate mechanism of the great machine under his control.

Irresistibly it was pulsing onwards now at top speed-limit. At 11.39, with the noiseless whir of a phantom engine and deep-toned hooter steadily droning forth warning, I W 10452a passed through Rayleigh. The miles to Winsted Hall were rapidly running down. And so was Time's hourglass.

§ 4

The moon had not yet risen, and the night was confusingly dark. Carried by its damp breath came the pleasant smell of green fields and mother earth and

the not far distant sea. In the vivid flood of light from the ever-rushing headlight the road seemed to stream under the car just as if it were a grey torrent flowing with incalculable rapidity, and taking hedgerows and ditches, trees and buildings along with it.

On Mr. Marlborough the smoothness, the swiftness of the motion—this endless progression, soaring through a nebulous dark void caused in time a sensation of unreality, of nightmarish existence on sufferance. A sensation heightened in considerable measure by the comparative loneliness of their travelling.

"Very few people about to-night," he cried in Savill's ear.

"Very few, sir. This extraordinary shortage in money keeps them at home."

Again Mr. Marlborough settled himself comfortably, and closing his eyes listened to the soft churring of the mechanism beneath, and waited for the occasional soft jolt and heave of the splendid body-work of steel and gun-metal when Savill took a turn too sharp. Then he forgot the taste of the pure cool air, full of the sweetness of clover and new-mown hay and green things, the wild roses, honeysuckle and flowering whitethorn wreathing the banks and hedges—forgot, indeed, the very end he was risking so much to experience. . . . It came to him his whole life had been an unreal progression like this he was now experiencing; had been but a futile boring through the vast dynamic forces that govern the well-being of an imperial nation. . . . It came to him, too, he had accomplished nothing real.

Upon the secret mirror of his dreams he had projected himself as a man of will, of action, whereas in truth he knew, so he now told himself, that he was a dreamer, taking the shadow for the substance, the vision for

the seen. . . . The life, the doings, of highest authority the Realm ?—he would he could have lived and died like Vice-Admiral Colbert, immortalized in that dauntless struggle against the Japanese Main Fleet. Yes, he wished with his whole heart he had been just such a man of action—not an invertebrate Prime Minister whose ' popularity ' alone enabled him to retain office, and compelled him to shape his ends to the exigencies of the times. Ah, to govern, not be governed. . . . To be free of the smell of the fustian jacket and corduroys.

He woke out of his reverie, to find his secretary again touching him to attract his attention.

" Great show of searchlights away Shoeburyness-ward, sir," Savill remarked. " There, Sheerness comes into play also. Both sides the Thames have suddenly increased their lights. Hullo ! Sound of a gun, sir, and another and another. A naval fight on, surely."

The Premier aroused himself, and curving his hands about his goggles peered at the far-away haze of white light. Reflected at first low down in the south-south-east, it spread almost instantaneously westward till the darkness above London River glowed like a grey uncanny dawn, in which great rays of stronger light shot, wheeled and leapt across the sky.

" Yes, yes, I see the searchlights," cried Mr. Marlborough, " but I don't hear the guns. Slow down for a minute."

As the car with subsiding murmur came to a stand, he took off his goggles, and stared at the vast and colourless glow. No guns afar again thudded forth, weird and prophetic, across the few miles of intervening land and sea. To Mr. Marlborough that bodiless radiant force shooting into the steely spaces of the night instantly symbolized those other forces, more terrible

and more irresistible, that were there, ready to strike with sudden death and all attendant horrors.

A shudder of repugnance passed through him.

"Oh, it is horrible savagery this callous slaying of man by man," he muttered. "This national honour, too, that demands it. . . . No, not yet, Savill, wait another second or two. Doubtless some German cruiser has ventured too close in. . . . None too many of our vessels in home waters just at present."

The secretary jumped out, and taking the little clock-lamp out of its case on the dial-board in front of the steering-wheel went to the back of the car and busied himself with the accumulators. Mr. Marlborough, listening intently, looked about him.

Ahead, trees of hornbeam, birch, hazel, ash and oak stood out, lining each side of the road, and tangled at the verge with bramble and sloe. In the thick of the woods behind, the night-life sounded mysteriously in each crackling of the twigs or rustling amongst the leaves. In a sudden pause, that deepened the conscious silence, there came the clear and melodious notes of a mastiff barking of a sudden over the woods and open country inland; and faint though the sound was, it seemed to awaken other watchful hounds away in the north-east.

"The 'watch-dogs of England' appear to be as wide awake on land as at sea," remarked Mr. Marlborough sententiously, eyeing the vast reflection still in the sky. "The guns, Savill! — I hear them now."

The secretary straightened himself, and listened. "Yes, firing again—heavier this time."

"I trust, no night attack on the mouth of the Thames," said the Premier, notes of annoyance, exasperation, in

his voice, "Very awkward . . . this . . . me out of town. However, can't be helped."

"In ten minutes we'll be at Winsted, sir, and then I'll ring up for the news," replied Savill, closing the cover of the accumulator-chamber; "unless you think it wiser to turn back to town. The firing is certainly increasing."

"I think we had better turn, Savill," came the Premier's answer, in a voice that distinctly told of his dissatisfaction with himself and the aggressive enemy.

Energetically Savill jumped into the tonneau, and swung back the control-lever; but to his dismay the car did not move. Again he tried, and again, but the heavy vehicle stood inert.

"This is confounded, sir," he cried, as he grabbed the clock-lamp, and sprang down into the road again. "The controller, I expect; something wrong with it. It gave me trouble the last time. The big spanner, in the box at your feet, sir. . . . Yes, that one. . . . Thanks." And in a trice Savill, with coat off and shirt sleeves rolled up, was standing by the car laboriously unscrewing the cover-plate of the controller.

As the dull thudding of heavy guns waxed and waned away south-eastward, Mr. Marlborough stirred uneasily. The frown gathering on his face grew harassed and strained.

"Quick, Savill. Quick as you can," he needlessly cried, leaning over the side of the tonneau.

Just then there rang the faint crackle of rifle fire some miles ahead, to the left; then came as sudden a stillness; but in a second or two it was broken by an ominous scattered firing. This lasted but a very brief time, and then died down in a series of single reports. Their faint echoes were overwhelmed by

the wild pealing of churchbells ; and the mad clamour smote the ear in waves of awful meaning—as the booming of the seaward forts pulsed fiercer through the windless summer night.

Savill had paused in his work and stood erect, mentally taking note, too, that some motor cyclists were coming along from westward. The distant cluttering of their tiny engines sounded like so many sewing machines.

Mr. Marlborough and his secretary stared at each other as if transfixed.

" . . . Great Winsted bells. . . ." Savill jerked out. " It's the alarm."

" Yes . . . The Germans at last," said the Premier in a low tense voice, in which was no trace of excitement, yet perhaps of resignation—certainly, of rising anger. " My God, and here I am——"

" We'll cut through the woods to the Hall, sir," Savill interrupted feverishly. " Eight minutes by the cross-tracks. Father's 'Darracq' 'll make Southend Central and the mono-rail in eleven minutes. . . . Back in town in twenty minutes. . . . Don't jump out till these cyclists are passed." And Lesley running to the rear of the car obligingly switched on his tail searchlight to enable them to pass in greater safety.

Riding in line, the six cyclist scouts shot into the field of the electric's glare.

Savill had no need to note their dark-green uniforms and flat caps. There rang sharp and menacing, " Halt ! Wer da ? "

" Jump. Jump," he shouted to the Premier, and switching off the tail-light of the car he threw himself reckless at the nearest enemy.

There was a crash, and cries of rage and warning.

Savill had toppled headlong against the leading scout, and caused the tumbling German to fall athwart his neighbour, thus upsetting him also. Fire flashed in Lesley's eyes; shots went off around him. The Wurtemberger sprawling partly beneath him and partly beneath his heavy cycle twisted himself round on his right side, frantically trying to free himself. Clutching hold of Savill, who was half-dazed with the fall and struggling to recover his feet, he fumbled for his revolver. As he did so, a desperate bareheaded figure threw itself forward, whirling the heavy spanner; and so crushing was the blow that the German's temples were beaten in, his brains and blood spurting into the air.

Ahead, there was a sound of a voice cheering on the men and shots rang out in rapid succession. The nearest enemy struck by a bullet dropped his weapon, and hiccoughing blood lurched to the ground, his legs entangled in his machine. Like automata the survivors of the party wheeled and rode furiously away, the rearmost one delivering a useless fire.

"Savill, are you hurt, are you hurt," Mr. Marlborough cried in a horror-stricken voice, glancing at the dead. "My God, I have killed him."

But Lesley, not believing his eyes, had staggered forward.

"Isobel," he called, in the nakedness of his emotions, his eyes bearing incredulously on Miss Stellman.

Yes, it was 'la belle Américaine'—misnomer for such a glorious creature cast in the heroic mould. Against the shade of the trees overhanging the right side of the highway she stood, half emerging from the undergrowth and bracken hiding the mouth of the path. The

very embodiment of a beautiful Maenad born out of time.

On hearing Savill's voice, she dropped her right hand that was still holding the revolver at the present, and fled to him with wildly heaving bosom.

"They were killing you," she panted in a voice thick with conflicting fears, excitement and rage. "Quick!—the woodland path."

Lesley noted that her gown of creamy soft silk was torn and ripped, with tips of bramble still sticking to it, parts of the skirt rent into ribands. Stains of green mould and earth discoloured it in great irregular patches where she had tripped and fallen; her dainty suède shoes were besmirched and sodden with mud. Straight from the startled supper table had she sped. The two armed men-servants with her rushed forward, panting out the awful news; but Lesley neither saw nor heard them. She alone held his eyes.

"Good God, Miss Stellman . . . you!" he jerked out, catching her by the arm in his impulse to keep her safe. ". . . You've saved us."

She swayed, yet not through fear, but with her headlong flight; in her brilliant eyes resting on him shone something more than joy of achievement—rescue. Incoherent exclamations burst from her when her gaze swiftly travelling beyond him took in the dead scout lying in the electrics' dazzling light, blood from its battered skull hideously blotching the white dusty road.

Mr. Marlborough and the two servants were bending over the nearer German.

"Not I . . . the men . . .," she replied in a staccato voice, her eyes coming back to him. "I just scurried

off, this way, to warn you ; Mr. Savill didn't know . . . sent the men, too. Caleb's gone towards Southchurch in case you came by that road. The Germans are landing everywhere.

Rifles cracked out, not far ahead and in the rear. Mr. Marlborough and the men came running to them.

" Mr. Marlborough ! " she gasped, recoiling a step or two. " Mr. Marlborough . . . here. Oh, it is ridiculous ! . . ."

§ 5

Perhaps latent jealousy of Mr. Marlborough had prompted Miss Stellman in her remark. Perhaps, again, she had been overmastered by that keen sense of dry ironical humour that, based upon the inapposite, seems to thrive so freely in the bracing air of the United States of America. Anyhow, what Mr. Savill cried in his access of poignant amazement and mental throes when his eyes beheld the Premier is much more cogent and humane.

" Good Heavens ! This is terrible, Mr. Marlborough," he exclaimed, pausing in the short passage between the hall and his business-room, into which Lesley and his companion had hurried by the wing corridor leading from the west side-entrance while Miss Stellman had sought Mr. Savill. " . . . You . . . here. It is unspeakable. . . . And neither car nor horses to get you away with. . . . We've got to hold the house. Colonel Bonning says so. Thousands of Germans landing at Barling, and marching on Shoeburyness. Their fleet is engaging Sheerness. They are trying to seize the mouth of the Thames. . . . We've got to hold the house."

" Yes, the house must be held," replied Mr. Marl-

borough, whose eyes had roved round the business-room—its established comfort and peace contrasted so startlingly with the noises around them; "it is well the message came through before the enemy could pick it up. This violation of international law must be resented by all force of arms."

Mr. Savill's lips motioned in speech, but with an effort he restrained himself. In his opinion Mr. Marlborough's remark concerning 'international law' showed him to be more than ever a hopeless visionary, not a leader of men. To think of international law, with foemen at the door. It rang infantile to the man of action.

Just then Lesley who had hurried into the hall came back with a look of desperation on his sweaty features. Overwrought with suspense and excitement, he gave an inarticulate exclamation; it might have been a curse or a prayer,

"Mr. Marlborough must be got away," he cried in a husky voice. "The Hamers woods path. . . . Southchurch for him. He must be got away."

"Yes . . . must be got away. That is the only safe path," Mr. Savill ejaculated, turning quickly to the Premier.

Mr. Marlborough had stepped out into the great hall, and was looking about him with frowning eyes. He was breathing heavily as if he still felt the effects of the race through the woods. His whole attitude was suggestive of a beaten man.

At the turn in the broad staircase leading up to the quaint sixteenth century gallery of carved oak running round the hall and leading to the upper corridors, a party of men-servants were piling high a stout barricade; ruthlessly were they dragging from the gallery

walls and ante-chambers the far-famed Savill collection of oak furniture, to jam the splendid François Premier sideboard on the top of the Flemish settles, and stop up the apertures with the rare oak chests, and the suits of armour last used at Flodden Field and Boulogne. At the further end of the hall giving on the drive and terraces, a large gang of half-dressed villagers with frantic haste were shoring up the heavy half-doors of the front entrance, and blocking up the vestibule and the oriels on each side of it by means of mattresses, planks, and boxes and bags of earth and gravel. Throughout the Hall, a home of 400 years' peace and serenity, now sounded the trampling of hurrying feet, the hoarse excited voices and energetic commands, and all the untoward commotion of the hasty preparations for defence.

"Quick, sir. You'll get away in time yet, before they come up in force."

The Premier looked up from beneath his eyebrows at Mr. Savill. Emphatically he shook his head.

"Fate has proved too strong for me," he muttered in a rasping voice. "It is you yourself who have willingly given up all hopes of escape. I thank God for the example. . . . No higher and truer proof of English manhood than to fight for England. I know it now, too late. No, gentlemen, no, I stay with you."

"Impossible," both the Savills broke out with.

Lesley stepped impetuously to him in his height of entreaty. "Your post is at Downing Street, sir."

"Like the rest of them, would you too make a coward of me," came the gusty, harsh remonstrance. "The nation to think I ran from the enemy—took refuge in my high office as a Minister. . . . A Pacificist, true, but first and before all—an Englishman,

thank God. . . . That burst of firing, Savill. . . . Quick, quick, to the front."

"They're coming. . . . The Germans are coming. . . ."

The desperate voices pealed throughout the air. There came riflemen running up the elm-lined avenue, and others plunging, crushing through the rhododendron shrubbery bordering the sweep of gravel before the east wing of the house—the surviving defenders of the main road barricade just carried by the enemy at the point of the bayonet. Even as the courtyard gates were slammed behind them, a scattered fire covering them, broke out from the mullioned windows in the great pile of building facing the avenue.

Yes, the Germans had come.

To land on the coast between the Thames, the Roach, Crouch and Blackwater, raid Shoeburyness and the Isle of Sheppey with its Royal dockyard, and thus to command the mouth of the Thames—even but for a short while—is a very old and ardent dream of Germany's General Staff. Properly enough do they go about their work, to wit, in order to inflict upon their adversary as much 'moral and intellectual' damage as commercial, military and political.

To a military nation, true worshippers of Mars, putting 5,000,000 trained men into the field, the loss of 50,000 troops is nothing comparable to the accomplishment of their end. And in this instance, 1920, Germany's end was about to be attained during the brief absence of the British North Sea Fleet from its command of home waters. At 12 p.m. that same night of June 23 its fore-barbette guns were hammering out at the rearmost units of the first 'German Sea'

squadron as at twenty-two knots they passed westward of the Island of Sprogo, through the Great Belt, into the Baltic, while the artillery, great and small, of Shoeburyness and Sheerness fortifications were furiously essaying to repulse the enemy's attack.

If Germany lacks initiative and sea instincts she does not lack 'grit' and that chancing of great hazards which leads, not unseldom, to high victory.

Thus had come that irregular blotch of faint red suffusing the night heavens away over Barling. Thus had come these ruddy glows reflected nearer Winsted Hall as the prosperous villages of Little and Great Winsted were given to the flames. For, the labourer with his pitchfork and billhook, the marksman with his gun, the men of Essex were rising against the invader. No! Not all England had remained Pacificists.

At that very minute, in Winsted Hall library, Caleb Dreischer, dusty and glistering with sweat after his hot-foot search for Savill, was wondering why on earth Mr. Marlborough smiled so strangely to himself.

In the shaded light of the little electric hand-lamp close by, the Premier's eye had fallen on a book in the three-feet thick breastwork blocking up the lower half of the window. His magnum opus!—*Pleas for Arbitration and International Law*.

Behind it came the whit-whit of German bullets and the crash of broken glass.

CHAPTER III

BLOW, BUGLES, BLOW; SET THE WILD ECHOES FLYING

THE Hall echoed to the shots of the defenders, but outside the fusillade rose steadily in intensity; a hurricane of bullets rattled on the stout walls or found an entrance to bury themselves in the wainscot. Already the enemy had extended their attack from their line of route. From the front of the Hall, down at the foot of the garden terraces where a broad sweep of turf separated the elms from the stews, in which carp and perch peacefully eddied about under the broad leaves of the orange lotus and the flags, a heavy rifle fire was being poured in on the gleams of light showing through loopholes and crannies in the barriers blocking every opening, window and door, of the Hall.

Mr. Savill's military training, which he had got as an officer of the 4th Essex (territorial) battalion, was being put to emphatic use. He possessed one paramount quality as a commander: he could decide swiftly and on his own initiative; and take responsibilities.

It had been the quick destruction of Barling and the Winsted townsteads, the ease with which the enemy had thrown forward flanking reinforcements crushing the gallant stand made there by the bands of

rifle-club men, that had convinced him of the uselessness of trying to hold the highway along which came the hostile line of advance. On receiving his report the commandant at Shoeburyness had ordered him to act as seemed most fitting in resistance to the attack, till reinforcements arrived. The rolling of the great guns seaward had prepared him for the news that no men could be spared from the batteries.

With ninety-five men, composed for the most part of Winsted levies, members of his own rifle-club, and forty marksmen of the Essex Cyclist Corps (Southend-Westcliffe division) together with his household and outdoors staff, the squire of Winsted was facing the invader's vanguard.

Entrenched behind the walls of his forefathers' dwelling, this calm, equable English gentleman was now being transformed into a fighting brute of rare and gallant stolidity; encouraging, invigorating his men, educing in them that stolidity against tremendous odds, which, indeed, has been a national feature of their race. And in that terrible and paralyzing atmosphere of life and death, of inevitable and murderous disaster, John Bull had need of his forefathers' pluck.

§ 1

"We can't resist the attack . . . only delay them." Mr. Savill cried in answer to the Premier, as, keen-eyed and quick-eared, he paused in the library, during his run through the great house—directing its defence, shifting his little garrison as the pressure of the enemy's fire required. "Pray God, we hold them till the troops cover Shoeburyness rear. It's wholly open to attack."

A spurt of scattered bullets blasted away the upper

lattice-work of the oriel that, flanked by two tall narrow windows, lighted the library from the westward; screaming across the spacious room, they bespattered the bookcases on the farther side, splintering the woodwork, and knocking into atoms the twin busts of Savill's grandparents. Though the Germans had not as yet pushed their attack on the west wing—being afraid of a counter-attack from the skirt of dense wood coming close up to the yew hedge there, that with larkspur set under it formed such a well-known triumph of edging to the sweep of lawn—the weight of their fusillade was rapidly increasing.

Mr. Marlborough called out to Savill; but the tremendous smacking of bullets on the stone walls, the resonant singing note as they smote and tore an onward way where they could, the strident uproar, the crash of splintered gargoyle and guttering and tinkle of shivering glass, overpowered the notes of his voice; and ere he could call out again, 'Lieutenant-Colonel' Savill had rushed from the chamber.

The Premier again knelt down in the shelter of his breastwork, and as he pulled the box of cartridges nearer he cast an eye at Dreischer.

The pursey little ship-owner caught his glance; significantly he tapped the stock of his gun.

"We've got to do it," he shouted huskily.

Mr. Marlborough nodded. As significantly he tapped the 'magnum opus' staring him in the eye; and both of them smiled very grimly at each other. Mr. Marlborough had ceased to be an Internationalist.

§ 2

Of a sudden, the enemy pressed home their attack. Faint above the rhythmic rattle of musketry rang the

shrilling of Lesley Savill's whistle at the back of the Hall. At the sound of it, his father and those scurrying about renewing ammunition pouches and boxes and tending the wounded rushed towards the walled-in courtyard, snatching up such weapons as came to hand.

In the baffling darkness of the early summer morn, the helmeted Germans were indistinctly visible, struggling to climb over the gateway, for the courtyard walls were too high to scale without ladders and grappling hooks. But the defenders had sprung up on the barricade behind the gate, and were hammering at them with rifle butts and gun barrels, axes, hammers, and even their bare fists. An understrapper fiercely jabbed at them with a hayfork, while one of the lodge-keepers and a gardener smashed at the heads before them with iron bars, beating down through bone and brain. The Germans were shouting as they fought. Some of the English endured the cruel strokes of war in silence, and others with savage cursings, deep-muttered cries, grunts, like beast kind.

Mr. Savill leapt up on to the near corner of the barricade and leaning over the heads of his nearest men fired into the body of the attack. From the windows of the Hall commanding the gateway, his riflemen poured out a heavy fire that seared the night like blobs of solid white flame. At point-blank range, it swept the attacking column with effect, drenching the cobble in blood and cluttering it with heaps of dead and writhing, jerking wounded.

Under the storm of lead, the Germans gave way, they fell back behind the shrubberies at the top of the avenue and the thick hedges of privet and whitethorn lining the back road to the Hall, debouching before

the courtyard and the domestics' wing. From the loopholes there they were pursued by a hot fire. Madly the defenders then cheered. Yet as many of them rushed to the row of buckets, and thirstily gulped down great mouthfuls of water, the enemy's fusillade broke out more fiercely than ever. Bullets crashed through the gate—plopped in splashes of crackling sound through the mossy slabs of stone roofing the long stable and coach house—sang vindictively across the yard. But who heeded them now?

Along the front of the barricade many of the defence were firing, and bobbing up and down into cover behind the top of the gate. Savill shouted in vain to them to save their ammunition.

As, intending to drag them down into shelter, he scrambled up on the heap of tiles, bricks, balks of timber and barrels of earth wedged into the gateway, one of them coolly shoved his head over the gate to take a narrow look at something on the ground there. The next moment he opened his mouth to give the alarm, but was hit by a bullet between the eyes; and with a stifled guttural cry he fell backwards.

Stooping low Lesley Savill crawled to him, but the gamekeeper was dead. Lesley's hands came in contact with the gaping wound in the top of his skull, from which blood and a warm mass of brain had spurted out. At another time he would have been horrified, and have turned sick, but now that strange indifference which mercifully comes over men in battle was on him.

"Dead as a door-nail," he rasped to the under-strapper, who had flung himself down beside the corpse. "Keep in cover, keep in cover, you fool, till they try to rush us again."

From the front of the Hall came a shriller and more menacing note swelling the roll of the Mannlichers, and in his hurry to regain the house Lesley threw himself from the barricade into the yard. As he picked himself up there came from behind the gate a sudden crash, a sharp ringing explosion. In the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of one of the men on the barricade, silhouetted black against dazzling white flame, and throwing up his hands to protect his face. A volcanic outburst of sound deafened the ear; acrid smoke and fumes swept forward, bewildering and suffocating.

The gate had been blown to fragments by the enemy's explosive; half of the defenders near it—luckily they were few, killed on the spot, the others, maimed, dazed—stunned. Even those further back felt the numbing shock; yet they gallantly rushed into the smoke, and found the destruction was not as complete as expected. Into the gap thus formed the looser material of the barricade had fallen, still blocking the entrance. But hardly had the damage been discovered than the enemy charged anew with the bayonet.

Desperately the untrained men of Essex braced themselves for the repulse. In the murky yard, entwined fighting bodies twisted and surged.

Many of the defenders, in the height of their savage abandon clutching hold of bayonet and rifle-barrel, hurled themselves bodily upon the Germans. But through sheer weight of numbers they were overwhelmed, most of them to fall fighting as they gave way, foot by foot. Only a few of them found temporary safety behind the door leading from the courtyard into the servants' hall.

Even as the axes and sledgehammers of Lesley Savill

and his men jammed into place the beams and great wedges shoring up the low-browed entrance, and others in frantic haste dragged forward the material to block the winding passage, the furious battering of the enemy upon the massive oaken structure, made by men who had conquered the Spanish Peril, was splintering its nail-studded surface.

§ 3

Lesley paused for a minute or two in the servants' hall to give assistance in dragging the great dressers of solid oak into the mouth of the passage leading from the courtyard and south kitchen garden, and fixing them in place by means of the tables wedged in traverse-ways. Then wiping the sweat off his face, he leaped back to avoid being buried under a heavy fall of plaster. He shot a look at the tall Dutch clock that near the fireplace peacefully ticked away inside its case of faded cherrywood and mother-of-pearl, just as if the under-footman was dozing as usual in the armchair alongside it, and querulously wondering when the 'master' was going to bed.

1.12 a.m. Only two hours ago he had been slowly clearing the night traffic at the top of Ludgate Hill, never deeming to be frustrated by the terrible circumstances of war—never deeming to have to face them in the shadow of death cast by his own roof-tree. Ay, face them on the sacred soil of England, within thirty minutes' rail of the Empire's metropolis. It seemed aeons since he had picked up Mr. Marlborough. But he felt no terror at the nightmare storm that was about to sweep all away.

He had realized that he and his were playing

their small part—responding to this sudden call for a sacrifice for England, doing their poor best to make the path of the invader more difficult.

A sudden frenzy to be done with it all, a sudden blind rage at the enemy and their destruction of all that was dear to him, swept through the young man as the growing intensity of the firing took his senses. Swelling the roar of the hostile fusillade on the front of the Hall came the shriller and more penetrative notes of machine guns.

Calling to the men about him to follow, Lesley dashed from the servants' hall.

A Little Winsted villager, wounded, unable to stand on his foot, and propping himself up, in the doorway of the housekeeper's room a little way down the broad passage, arrested him by his cry of 'The squire, sir, the squire.' An access of paralyzing fear took Lesley as he turned aside into the chamber. His father was lying on the couch there, Miss Stellman and another bending over him.

"Father! Have they wounded you?" Lesley cried, brushing both of them aside, and for a moment or two he had to master himself to control his horror, fury, passionate grief. "Oh, dad, dad," he moaned, stooping down to him.

Mr. Savill had been bayoneted through the cheeks; and his lower jaw, wrenched partly away, hung down, a bleeding cavity of raw flesh, bone and teeth. He had also been struck in the stomach. Yet notwithstanding all he was trying to speak. The very stoical will of him made the expression of his upper-face dreadful in its earnestness. On seeing his son, he shot his left arm up into the air, his fingers working convulsively; the horrible mass where should be mouth and

tongue pulsated with his inarticulate moan. More venomous, more ominous rang the storm of hostile fire encircling the house. A dull thud shook its walls to their foundations.

"What does he want?" Lesley huskily asked Miss Stellman.

Scissors in hand, she was removing with quick long snips the clothing adhering to the wounds, and sponging away the blood.

She looked up for a second or two, and eyed Mr. Savill; and though tears glistered on her dark eyelashes they were not and yet were for the blood upon her hands. She was still in her dinner gown, that torn before by the twigs and brambles was now splashed hideously with blood. The Norfolk shooting jacket which she had hurriedly thrown on at the first of the attack was unbuttoned at the throat, and revealed the famous 'Bourbon' pearl necklet with its clustered ropes gleaming on her naked bosom. White and drawn was the beautiful face above it, and the gracious mouth set in rigid lines of self-suppression. It was the fire in her glowing eyes that revealed the intensity of her emotions.

"To hold the house, that's what he means. . . . Oh, God, when will this end?"

"Not before they have stormed it," replied Lesley tersely, "or relief comes. You wouldn't have me surrender, Isobel?"

She shot a look at him with her clear, open eyes, into which her inmost secret had welled. Lesley's heart, so long dormant with regard to the past times spent with her, became acute to Life's rarest symphony thrilling his being. It is war that strips human pretensions of their tinsel, and lays bare the

essentials of existence. War which ennobles or debases the individual it tests.

"No! Not surrender," she sobbed a little under her breath, turning again to Mr. Savill. "Not surrender. . . . But it is so hard to lose them all, and you, too."

A sudden burst of uncontrollable feeling, of unutterable devotion, swept irresistibly through Lesley. As he wheeled to go he snatched at her hand, and pressed it against his lips.

"Isobel . . . dear . . ." he uttered, the volume of meaning that inflected his tones denying all repression, "pray God, we both see this through. . . . Be sure, you tie something white about your arm. Red Cross. . . . You know. . . . You can do nothing more for father."

Isobel caught him by the arm as he left.

'But, Les, don't the enemy know Mr. Marlborough's here?"

Savill emphatically shook his head. It was impossible.

§ 4

The attack on the south side of the Hall had steadily increased in virulence as the strength of the enemy came up. The Germans were working their way to close quarters by the terraces. A hot firing from behind the balustrade of the topmost terrace, facing the Hall, showed that they had discovered this infinitely safer method of approach. Creeping under the front of a terrace, they collected there, and then worked steadily with entrenching tools till they had cut a partly-sheltered way across the end of that terrace, and could then creep onwards under the screen afforded by the

rise in the next, where they repeated the same operation.

Good marksmen posted at the loopholes in the barricades filling the upper windows of the Hall and on its roof behind the ivy-covered chimneys severely harassed them ; but the confusing morning twilight, thick with the nitrous fumes of gunpowder, baffled certainty of aim. Ceaseless blazed the spitting, flashing fire through the openings of the balustrade, except at its north-west end where the enemy were sapping upwards. Their rapid advance appeared to be inevitable.

The redness low down over the feathery tops of the woods to eastward, the pale whiteness higher in the sky, the nearest objects rapidly growing less shadowy, more defined, revealed the approach of morning. But it was morning, bringing that final close struggle to which there could be but one issue.

Savill had hurried up to the low sloping roof, where the small band of chosen marksmen, keeping well in shelter of the massive chimney-stacks, were steadily firing at the scattered lines of crackling rifles.

As he scrambled through the attic window, giving access to the broad old mossy gutter, between the rise of the stone-tiled roof and the low ornamental running along the grey front between the gables, and bobbed his head to a zipping bullet, his memory played him a trick. He thought, with a sharp, savage pang at heart, of how he and his brothers used to play at hide-and-seek about its many odd nooks and chimney stacks and gables, their father, now in mortal throes, vainly trying to chase them into safety.

Somewhere on the roof, amidst the spluttering racket and ear-splitting screeching of the rifles and machine-guns which the enemy had now brought into action

on the front of the Hall, Savill heard the faint twittering of the sparrows. Away to the south-east, the glare of the wheeling and inter-wheeling searchlights and the red reflections on the clouds showed the fierce struggle still going on for possession of the river. The extent of the weird illumination and the ceaseless booming of great guns indicated that not only was Shoeburyness still in action but Sheerness also with its low-lying batteries and hard-pressed defence flotilla. While, too, by the roar of artillery far away to the right at Canvey Point on that dyke-guarded island, the new fort there seemed to be at work.

As Savill crept along to the roof of the east wing, it came to him as being very strange the enemy had not employed artillery in their destruction of the Hall.

"I thinks I 'eard un," replied a local sharpshooter to his question, as the man sank back into shelter of the great gutter behind the balustrade to recharge the magazines of his rifle, "when the firin' died down a bit, I thinks I 'eard summat like guns a-comin' up the carriage-drive, sir. Ain't they stoppin' soon, sir, for a bit? I'm wery sharp on the wi'tols."

"Victuals," repeated Savill grimly, "your next meal, Devenish, is more likely to be a prog in the ribs with a German bayonet."

The enemy in the courtyard were at work, he saw, as he peered down, now and again swiftly ducking when the bullets whistled low overhead. He could not make out what they were doing, but instantly surmised it was preparations for blowing in the side of the main building there. Immediately above them rose the huge south-east stack of carved chimneys. Crawling back into the house he called up some of the men, with picks and crowbars, and set them to work under shelter of

the huge pile to throw it down on the working party below. It would be a race between the men above and the men below as to who would get their work done first.

Suddenly, as Savill, crouching low, was straining his eyes through the night-glass away into the north-east, towards Barling, there came a faint shock of heavy firing, apparently from the direction of North Shoebury House, then just that instant the firing seaward seemed to slacken. The men beside him began to cheer; it was but weakly.

Yes, help must be coming.

Savill dug his teeth into his lips to keep himself calm, and vainly tried to check himself from trembling. Again that shock came, and again; then the furious thudding of a battery of artillery coming into action, somewhere not very far off, distinctly took the ear.

"The troops are coming. The troops are coming. We'll be saved," Lesley shouted, in a mad ecstasy of joy.

As shouting it, he ran along the narrow, low passage between the but little used front and back rooms of the third story—where the valuable old-fashioned furniture, bedsteads of two hundred years old and more, venerable high-backed chairs, carved oak or walnut chests and escritoires, tables, toilette-stands, and old English tapestries had all been thrust up against the narrow casements to give some cover to the defence—he passed Mrs. Dreischer. She was kneeling beside a wounded sufferer, lying in the dim illumination of the oil-lamp lighting the landing of the back stairs; and trying to bandage his shot-riddled side; but already the blood was trickling from his lips as he hiccoughed heavily in his last throes.

"We are saved. The troops are coming," Lesley cried in passing her.

She but shook her head, and pointed significantly to the dying man, in her mute abhorrence of war. Yet already had war purged her tetchy nature, and set it to noble ends.

§ 5

Would help come in time?—that was the question Lesley asked himself as he hurried through the Hall towards the library. The position was become desperate. On the front, the rush for close quarters might come at any moment. On the east side, the wall of the house might be blown in, and simultaneously an attack might come from the courtyard. The little garrison was decimated, and dead and dying lay scattered throughout the rooms and passages. Ammunition was running low; and the riflemen having no bayonets a hand-to-hand struggle could have but one ending.

"The troops are coming," Mr. Marlborough repeated in a husky voice not his own. "Thank God, then I can surrender myself. Cease firing, Savill. We have had enough butchery. I surrender myself and doubtless they will spare you all, with honour. . . . Shoeburyness is safe now. Thank God, I have done my duty."

The morning was springing fast, but the air in the room was thick with smoke and gunpowder gas; and Savill only indistinctly made out the Prime Minister's face, though it stood there in his eye—ghastly white, the left temple and eyebrow clotted with viscid blood from a scalp wound, the right cheek bleeding where grazed by a bullet. And, too, the intensity of mental

suffering and agony of self-abnegation in Mr. Marlborough's tones were lost on him.

"Surrender you?" he breathed passionately. Never!"

"Cease firing; I order it. They know I am here. It has only now come to me, I left in the car my overcoat with one or two wholly immaterial private letters in its breast pocket. . . . They know I am here. This butchery is now for me."

In that wrecked and stifling chamber, where a few men were still firing from the barricaded windows—where bullets had pitted the walls and riddled the bookcases and wainscot between, where here and there bodies, some huddled and some still twisting in agony, lay on the floor varnished with their blood—John Stanhope Marlborough had at last revealed himself as the true-born Englishman.

Savill with louring face thrust himself nearer as if to grasp the Premier by the arm, but that instant the whole house shook as if with an earthquake. There came a rumbling thunder of falling masonry, and the cries of agonized men; and for a moment every one stood still, thinking the walls were tumbling about their ears. Dense suffocating smoke poured slowly into the passages and chambers. The next moment the attack were storming the lower windows of the Hall.

Over the partly-wrecked barricade in the near window, bayonets bristled and gleamed in the fast-springing morning light. A grim-faced sergeant with the iron cross on his breast hurled himself into the room, a crush of burly linesmen at his heels. They kept their bayonets down, stabbing at the few defenders who had thrown themselves at them.

Lesley dashed forward, and putting his revolver

between the heads of two of his men fired into the madly-cheering crowd, and two Germans fell; yet the terrible, jabbing bayonets came on. Three of the defenders went down, writhing with death-wounds, one of them tumbling backwards, hands thrown above his head, his last breath gone in a shrill, long-drawn squeal of agony. And as Savill flung his emptied Webley in the sergeant's face, he saw the Premier smashing out with the butt of his gun.

Even as he sprang to his assistance, and with a desperate jerk hurled aside a Prussian lunging at him, the notes of bugles faintly penetrated the infernal hubbub, and the erratic firing suddenly multiplied a hundredfold into a tornado from cackling rifles and machine-guns.

Lesley felt a crashing blow on his head. The horrible racket, confusion, around him suddenly ceased. It seemed in another moment that it all broke out again. He had a vague sense of hurry and bustle everywhere about him—shots and the outcries of men in mortal strife. Then it all stopped. . . . then it all began again. And it came to him that he was but dreaming of some battle in the war. . . .

When he awoke to reality he found himself looking up through interlacing boughs, and through a little cleft in the green foliage was a patch of blue, sunlit sky; voices, he heard around him and the intermitting roll of distant firing, rising and falling like the beat of the sea—but he felt no wish to move or speak; it was so restful to look up at the still, leafy branches, speckled overhead with sunshine. Then in a flash came recollections of the struggle, of his dying father and Mr. Marlborough, of the bayonet fight, and the ringing bugles of the rescue. Moaning heavily, he rose on

his elbow, then fell back again helplessly. But he had seen he was but one of many, lying under the trees on the west side of the smoking ruins of the Hall, and caught a glimpse of piled rifles and a party of redcoated Guardsmen; sitting on the mound of the old 'ice-house' they were busily snatching a breakfast from their open havresacks. Somewhere at hand, a happy blackbird was pouring his rich golden notes into the ear of morning—just as if the horrors and awful turmoil of war had not been. Away behind the north woods, the firing rang weaker. One insatiable gun was pealing out like a minute gun at sea. It proclaimed the doom of the forces of invasion.

A voice near by took Lesley's ear. "He was moaning? Come-to, I expect. . . . A very nasty knock."

Then one, apparently a surgeon, came behind Lesley, and dexterously undid the bandages swathing his head that felt bursting with excruciating pains. Some one also hurriedly knelt down beside him; and at sight of the lively recognition in his lack-lustre eyes, joy swept away the haggard weariness of the beautiful face.

"Oh, Lesley, Lesley," Isobel uttered huskily, caressing his slack hand with both of hers, and crooning over him in her burst of joy and grief, "you are spared, thank God."

"But father . . . Mr. Marlborough?" he gasped, casting wild glances about him.

"He'd better know now, Miss Stellman, else he'll fret," interjected the blunt-tongued Army surgeon, whose face bore the touch of the Indian sun. "It was found impossible to rescue Mr. Savill, sir, because of the heat and the fall of masonry; we just managed to

get the rest of you out in time. As for the Premier, he's much more likely to pull through than go under. . . . Saved Shoeburyness, you have, and him as well. Ye've made Englishmen proud."

§ 6

Yet less through Lesley Savill and his father than through his brother James and the crew of his old flagship, submarine G 5—that with four consorts from Harwich base had reinforced the Thames—had the freedom of England's Prime Minister been assured, and the defence of London River.

No form of warfare is so insidiously terrible to above-water combatants as that of under-water attack at night. Disconcerting in the daytime, it is under the cover of darkness, and in narrow waters, a thousand-mouthed Hydra rending all human stamina. And the gallant officers and men of Vice-Admiral Grotz's squadron, sweeping in out of the Barrow Deep to burst into deadly thunder upon the defences of the Thames, had to fight the aggressive, the monstrous, Unknown—that paralyzing factor on initiative and endurance.

At 11.35 that evening, when G 5, most seaward vessel of the north patrol of the Thames' mouth, was lying 'light' in a stationary position, while her electrician, artificers and officer were occupied, energetically securing the recurring defects in the self-adjustment gear of the forward trimming tank, her acting-signalman reported his sound recorders thrummed with the approach of several vessels. With an exclamation of annoyance and concern Captain Savill, who was lying on his side, himself working on the delicate mechanism,

instantly got up, and through the little door in the bulkhead reached the conning chamber.

"Yes, sir, number of vessels comin' down ahead," answered the signalman, unclipping the twin microphones from his ears to hand them to his officer.

"A clutch of steamers, Fernes, coming in together to save time at the vedettes," commented Captain Savill as he put in place the recorders.

The signalman, lightly resting both hands for instant use on the code-ringers, close by, attentively watched Captain Savill's face; on it a grave strained look was fast creeping. In the unshielded electric's glare the bulging sides and curved roof of the cabin stood out spotless in white paint with the shining gears and mechanisms so thickly studding it. In the stifling hot air of the confined interior of this older-class submersible pulsed the quaking throb of her gasoline engines keeping the great fish-like vessel in station against the first of the ebb. Through the trap-hatch in the conning tower sounded the angry swishle and lapping of the waters against her raised fore-and-aft platform.

Suddenly the voices of the men, breathing the fresher air on deck rang out sharp and loud; and just then Savill's ear caught the reports of quick-firers, which carried by the water with exaggerated concussions, smote and crashed in a very cataclysm of stunning sound.

"'Heavy firing ahead,' yes, I hear it," he drily rejoined on the acting signalman repeating the hail. "Communicate, 'Enemy in force.' Smartly, Fernes, before they pick up our bells."

As he slipped to the conning-tower hatch, he nodded approval to the men, now following each other down the short iron ladder to take up their posts for action.

"Stand by, to stop engines and switch on motors," was his significant order as he mounted into outer air.

With the slight up and down motion of her head against the tideway G 5's low narrow deck was wet and slippery, and Captain Savill remained standing in the trap-hatch. Even as he put his elbows on the top of the conning-tower in order to steady his gaze through already levelled binoculars, the firing rapidly neared; the glowing specks in the distance greatened into plumes of crimson flame, and to the crash of bursting shell and the crackling of quickfirers the seaward patrol of British destroyers and the enemy's torpedo flotillas tore past 2,900 yards away Thamesward. But Savill's sight was glued into east-by-north.

The estuary was calm, except for the tide ripples, a slight inshore air coming from north-north-west; and though the stars now and again twinkled overhead a thin heat-haze veiled the landward reaches of night sea. Fixedly Savill's eyes bore into the distance where the West Swin and Barrow Deep debouch on the river; as if aware of what was coming he ignored the life-and-death bickering of the torpedo craft and the deepening roaring of the seaward forts; his was mightier prey to be smitten by silent unseen blows. A feeling of suffocation took him as he stared, and heavily he breathed in the familiar smack of the sea and the acrid gassy smells of petrol and burnt lubricating oil coming in puffs from the vessel's shelving quarter as the waters rose and fell there. Of a sudden he stiffened himself, a strange exulting sensation thrilled his nerves, as into the field of his night-glass rushed the outines of the leading battleships of the enemy. His voice rang down through the conning tower; and instant hands moved levers, clutches, and switches,

the throbbing of the oil engines ceased, and the low buzzing of the electric motors succeeded. Then just for a second or two longer Captain Savill lingered 'on deck,' to take note of the bearings of the attack; in day time, with his periscope indistinguishable 500 yards away, the splendid fortresses of steel would have already felt his hidden blows. With a dull metallic thud the hatch was shut behind him as he dropped below, and the rasping of the screws hermetically tightening it gave token G 5 was about to seek the foe.

In the purring of the motors and the whirr of the passing waters as the great steel fish slid forward and downward, Captain Savill's voice rang hard and grating. His eyes were fastened on the fingers of the gauges indicating G 5's trim as her diving rudder sent her under.

"The enemy at last, lads—eight battleships, *Bayerns*. The forward tank adjustment. . . . we've got to risk it. . . . Steady, rudder—one degree. Carry on, as she goes. Two fathoms. . . . Stand by all for action."

Seven minutes later, the enemy were thundering forth their fierce and destructive bombardment, pelting Sheerness Dockyard with shell and setting it on fire as well as High Street, Blue Town and the innumerable little alleys and by-streets behind, and raining a high-angle fire on the forts defending Shoeburyness. In the mouth of the river, where the interlacing searchlight beams turned night into dazzling day and the water shattered by bursting shells into molten silver, torpedo craft hammering chaotically with their quickfirers jabbed and squirmed—hurled themselves against each other just like monstrous sea ants.

Then of a sudden on board the van unit of the belching squadron now coming abreast of the Cant bank, there leaped into the dusk of morning a tongue of flame more lurid than the yellow flashes of her 11-inch guns. It was immediately followed by a geyser of fire as the *Sachsen's* forward starboard magazine, hit by G 5's 18-inch Whitehead, exploded in dreadful thunder and rent apart her starboard shoulder and bows. Even as she swerved out of station, to settle down rapidly on her vast wound, G 5's second torpedo hit the stern of the *Bayern*, third in line. Out of control and gyrating wildly about, she threw her line into wild disorder.

Amidst the enemy's confusion and awful apprehensions of under-water attack, the remaining two units of the submarine vedettes, escaping the exploding mines towed up the fairway by the German division boats, maimed and drove aground on the shoal the *Pommern* and *Bavarien*.

At 12.55 the audacious attack had already failed, and firing stubbornly the Germans soon withdrew seaward in the direction of the Duke of Edinburgh channel, harassed by the British torpedo craft still battleworthy. Yet their battleships aground inshore and helpless—on fire, their hulls and works beaten and twisted into shapeless masses of scrap iron, their barbettes rent and dinted, choked by human débris—maintained an obstinate if erratic reply to the storm of projectiles bursting on and over them from the shoreward batteries. Only after the day had dawned did they surrender to the hails of a dockyard pinnace showing the white flag.

Of the British submarines engaged, only two rose again to the surface. Not till peace ensued was G 5

located. She was found lying on her starboard side in ten fathoms SSE of the Sheppey bank, having apparently been shifted by the currents. On examination of her interior by divers, the bodies of Captain Savill and his crew were discovered in the conning chamber lying in huddled positions, some of them with their hands still clasped as if in prayer. The defective self-adjustment of the forward trimming tank had failed to hold in check the sea-cock's leakage; one of the plates of the tank had been burst in. With her trim altered by the head and a dip of ten degrees G 5 had gone down like a slung stone . . . the last act of that which England's Premier had only three weeks previous so hastily jibed at as Captain Savill's 'stupid little tragedy.'

§ 7

At length then had it been driven home, in the one and only way, to all the parties culpable why England had failed to hold her own in her Narrow Seas. And one may speculate if this reason had at heart inspired Mr. Marlborough's heroism?

The Raid on Essex was the direct outcome of the Labour Ministry's economies, less in diminution of England's naval strength than in curtailing naval expenditure necessary for maintaining effective material. On June 24–25, the Royal dockyards and few shipbuilding firms yet possessing naval resources were still frantically repairing and equipping for active service the first draft of warships in reserve, namely, those which had been dismantled and moored at the various bases round the coast.

Consequent on the neutralization of all mercnantmen and the abrogation of all contraband and right

of search at sea, the alarms of a foray loomed more menacing than in the first and 'bogey' years of the century. Yet in the absence of the British North Sea Fleet, operating against the First 'German Sea' Squadron now safe in the Baltic, it was in the main the British mosquito fleets and submarines that had thwarted Vice-Admiral Grotz's daring attack. But though the attention of the north and east patrols off Harwich had been successfully diverted by a feint of the enemy's torpedo craft in the north-north-east, the Shipwash and Bawdsey shoals skilfully used as cover, the southerly division of Harwich naval force, reinforced by the submarines patrolling the approach to the Wallet and East Swin, had by their desperate valour thrown into confusion and black disaster the second and third divisions of the transports holding down the East Swin for the seaward reaches of the Crouch and Roach.

Only 5,000 men of the raiders had been flung ashore.

Southward, the fleet of invasion was covered by Vice-Admiral Grotz's squadron. And eastward, no attack was considered with fear, the few British cruisers and Admiral Tjeemk's two inferior squadrons, weakened by their gallant repulse of the German attack on Hellevoetsluis, June 14, being held in check by the Third 'German Sea' squadron: which was a collection of old vessels, it is true, but serviceable for sacrifice if a superior force had to be checkmated.

But from the north-west there had swept on the transports with their crammed and crowded decks, Death, horrible, monstrous, ravening, in the flying hulls of the British destroyers attacking in echelon, the sullen mouthing of their 4½-inch quickfirers lost in the crackling of the German guns. Ignoring for the

moment the German craft defending the troopships on Grotz's squadron parting from them, and breaking through their centre, the British defence had hurled themselves on the transports—inevitable bulls-eye targets looming out in the darkness and the murk of the fight. Five minutes later the submarines G 2 and 9, J 6 and 7, working in pairs, with periscopes submerged and bearings taken, had attained torpedo range.

Caught in the narrow waters of the leading channel, the transports were thrown into wild confusion in their endeavour to escape destruction. Many of them rammed each other and went down in nine fathoms off the East Gunfleet Knock, many ran aground on the Sunk Bank and surrendered when morning came, but more were sent to the bottom. For months after the long flats and beaches of Essex and Kent and Suffolk were dotted at ebbtide with the ghastly human trophies of victory. In the tangle of disjointed fighting amongst the torpedo craft, it is unquestionably the case that both sides sent several of their own consorts to the bottom.

§ 8

That night of wild excitement and consternation, the files of the Press sufficiently testify to. In Fleet Street and before the newspaper offices in the provincial centres, dense throngs clamoured for the latest news. Edition after edition was feverishly scanned as fast as it was issued; and those journals that published the most thrilling and panic-inspiring reports of 'the Great invasion' and the impending doom of London [illegible] to contradict their own imaginings by equally [illegible] exuberant accounts of victory.

At the first alarm the troops in the capital and at Warley, now a great training centre, and Colchester, had turned out with splendid promptitude in their peace kit. But without much searching, the succour of Winsted Hall and of Mr. Marlborough, whose absence had been immediately communicated to the War Office by Sir F. Smythe, was mainly effected by the cyclist rifle corps of north-east London and suburbs and the rifle-clubs of the garden cities in Essex. Even as the Yeomanry of old on the famous false alarm of the landing of the troops of Napoleon, had the men of 1920 risen from their slumbers to fight for King and Country, and in well-ordered bands had thronged along the dark roads of Essex, with them motor cars carrying machine-gun detachments and units of militia.

The thousands of sharpshooters and regulars steadily streaming into the confined area of the Raid through sheer weight of numbers had crushed the invaders and pent them up in Barling Marsh and the Wakering Levels behind Potton and Rushley Islands. At 11.53 a.m. that morning, after a dogged resistance bringing forth many acts of heroism and valour, the raiders, realizing they were unsupported and wholly outnumbered, surrendered with all the honours of war A generous concession, that brought down upon the Government a storm of denunciation.

And the irony of it all!

At 11.20, the previous evening, just before the first tide of alarm had burst upon Whitehall, Mr. James Holyoke, Leader of the Social Democrat group, had called at 10 Downing Street, seeking an urgent interview with Mr. Marlborough.

Mr. Holyoke had come straight from a conference

with the heads of the Trades Unions and the Socialistic Alliance at their headquarters in Arundel Street, Strand. Before them had been laid for their decision the correspondence from the Council of the Social-Democratic Alliance of German Labour, its headquarters in Potsdam. There had also been weighed into its purport the cablegrams emanating from the 'Boss' of the major 'labour machine' in the United States of America, and from the Committee of the League of Democracy and the Rights of Man, now permeating the artisan proletariat of France.

The complex machinery of organized Labour, though jarring somewhat, was about to go round.

It is our Juggernaut.

CHAPTER IV

THE INVASION OF AUSTRALIA

SWIFTER and still farther was the War God pursuing his awful course. The world had its orgy of human combat in both the Eastern and Western Hemisphere. The Invasion of Australia.

To Britons, excited and triumphant over the overthrow of the German Peril, this certainty appealed with cruel suspense and a measure of concern that in the last week of June eclipsed interest and joy regarding France's victorious onset in the Faucilles' 'Millionenschlacht.' It eclipsed, indeed, interest in matters political—Sir F. Smythe, at His Majesty's request, having now taken over the reins of office as Prime Minister, for Mr. Marlborough still hovered between life and death at Southchurch Manor; and, obscuring the fortunes of the Atlantic naval forces, it formed the chief topic on every one's tongue.

§ 1

That some of the transports had set sail on June 13–14 was now an authenticated fact, merchantmen having reported passing eighteen of them convoyed by Rear-Admiral Tamari's cruisers and four large battle-

ships pushing onwards at seventeen knots for Lombock Strait through the Molucca Passage; and again they were sighted off N.E. Timor, and, subsequently, Sandalwood Island.

With the blocking of the Panama Canal, the Atlantic Fleets of Britain and the United States en route for the Pacific had had to proceed east and by the Horn. Consequent on the establishing of naval forces by the Australian States, the Home Country had withdrawn her warships from Pacific waters, excepting survey vessels and the Imperial fisheries cruisers off the coast of British Columbia. With the destruction, then, of the British China Squadron on June 10, and the non-existence of an adequate U.S.A. naval force in Philippine waters, Japan now held complete command of the Indo-China waters and Far Pacific, thus compelling the Canadian reinforcements to remain in safety under the guns of the harbour batteries at Honolulu. Her First Battle Fleet had last been sighted in the Straits of Sunda, apparently going through some war exercises.

In Australia's very strength lay her dangerous weakness.

Though most of her 8,000 odd miles of coast-line had been rendered immune by Japan's adherence to Clause 32, Paragraph 23, of the terms of that Peace Convention binding its signatories to conduct hostilities solely against the adversary's military bases and zones, and capital, yet her five capitals and military bases, situated too far apart to reinforce each other, made her particularly vulnerable and helpless.

Throughout the States, the very knowledge of their weakness evoked a nightmare of fears and awful possibilities, the likelihood of which was augmented by

reports now 'corroborated' and now denied of additional fleets of conveyed transports having been sighted east of New Caledonia, and between Gillolo and New Caledonia, steering for the Australian coast. And that feeling, so prevalent in Europe during the Russian-Japanese War—that the Japanese as a military force could not be measured by ordinary standards but were a species of military Mahatmas—swiftly became sheer obsession. When on June 16 the Commonwealth Minister of Marine directed, as suggested by H.M. Board of Admiralty, that the battleships of Queensland (1), New South Wales (1), Victoria (2) and South Australia (1) were to form a juncture and under the command of Commodore Aylin, senior officer afloat, State of Victoria, were to proceed northward, together with their sea-going torpedo vessels, to seek out and destroy the approaching enemy, the virulent outburst of popular clamour in the States forced their Governments to refuse compliance.

The respective navies, they averred, had been raised not to be detached upon a far distant offensive but for the purposes of home defence. And so as the wrangle went on, the Japanese came down from the north. That which ultimately brought shame upon the recalcitrant States was to remain braggart and overpowering till the time appointed for its end.

The object of Japan was not conquest but vengeful reprisals for the riot at Sydney. The Australians had anticipated a stroke of this nature; they imagined that Sydney itself was the point aimed at, with perhaps a raid on Melbourne. But the enemy had fully realized to match a fleet against the defences of great fortified harbours and dirigible torpedo stations was to risk several of their first-class fighting ships being destroyed

or put out of action. They had not forgotten that terrible day before Port Arthur when two out of their six battleships and one of their cruisers had been sent to the bottom. No such risks now, when the ultimate result of the war depended on how many first-class fighting units they could put into the line for the great struggle which was to decide the fate of the Pacific.

The wealthy State of the West, then, they had chosen as the mark for their sudden and tremendous blow, while their demonstrations in heavy force off the east coast were keeping Sydney and Melbourne in constant alarm. That wealthy western naval base of West Australia, Fremantle, with heavy lodgements in the banks of gold from the Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie and Murchison goldfields, and a huge amount of capital sunk in harbour works, dockyard, and warehouses, was the enemy's objective.

Though West Australia had given less prominence than sister states to military matters, She had not neglected them. The bases of her naval forces—one second-class battleship, the *Waimura*, and four torpedo boats, two of which were stationed at Albany, Prince George's Sound —Fremantle and Albany were defended by heavy fortifications; Fremantle fort being especially powerful, with its four 12-inch guns in heavily armoured redoubts, superimposed with a revolving turret protecting two 15-inch breechloaders of Woolwich make. A boom was in place, closing Fremantle harbour. And, with the artillery and infantry militia now called to arms reinforcing the State regulars, there were at and about Fremantle 8,500 troops, under the command of their Commander-in-Chief, General Robert Murchison.

§ 2

Suddenly was West Australia forced to taste War's awful cup.

'Twenty-nine vessels in sight, steering S 10 E. Leading vessel of four battleships, line ahead to transports' starboard, thought to be the *Apraxin*. Three destroyers, to port of transports' rear, five cruisers, thought to be Tamari's squadron, just detached, line abreast, at full speed S25W.' This was the laconic marconigram taken in at 6.52 a.m., June 26, on board the West Australian flagship, *Waimura*, as lying alongside the naval jetty, Fremantle, she was energetically adjusting defects in her main oil-engines.

The Japanese Menace was a menace no longer: it had become the Real Thing at last.

Immediately the coastline patrols were drawn in to watch in case a landing might be attempted north and south of the port before the naval attack; and a proclamation issued calling on the citizens to keep calm and evacuate the town, and to seek safety at Serpentine, York, Newcastle, and other centres outside the zone of hostilities. The torpedo craft on retiring were moored up river, commanding its fairway, and the *Waimura* was shifted behind the north breakwater; her heaviest piece, a barbetted 10-inch quick-firer, mounted forward, trained to fire over it, and her port broadside of 7·5 guns brought to bear with the guns of the fort. Two battalions were kept in town to co-operate with the firemen and repress disorder, the rest of the troops being hastily moved in concentration for the defence of Perth.

§ 3

What happened at Fremantle is best described in the words of a local journalist, belonging to the Fremantle office of the *Western Mail*. His abbreviated account as cabled home the same afternoon is now given through the courtesy of its proprietors.

NARRATIVE OF J. F. SNUDDEN, EYEWITNESS OF THE BOMBARDMENT OF FREMANTLE ON JUNE 30, 1920.

The day was fine, with a smooth sea, and just enough wind to blow out the folds of the Empire Flag. The greater part of the citizens of Fremantle were too busy to show themselves on the quays and breakwaters, even if the military had allowed them, for most of folks were looking after themselves and belongings, thousands of them making for the capital. The sea front then was practically deserted when the Japanese squadron hove in sight, a number of oblong streaks, above them a thin cloud of smoke trailing down-wind.

I watched them from the top of the hill on the east side of the town near the new railway bridge. A few of the daring spirits, who were about to leave for Perth to join the Mounted Rifle Volunteers, formed a group near me; and a squad of signalmen, selected from those in our Naval Volunteers, a West Australian Naval Service signal boatswain in charge of them, were on duty not far away, and busy with their telescopes, heliostats, and wireless telephones, connecting them with headquarters.

Signal Boatswain Crarth accorded me the privilege of viewing the enemy through his powerful glass, and I plainly made out the four large powerful battleships holding in for the port in line ahead. Two small

vessels, which Crarth explained were torpedo craft, were steaming abreast of them to starboard. A third, with not a vestige of smoke coming from her oil-engines, was racing along far ahead of them at a tremendous speed, a white flag flying from her pole mast. Further away to the northward, behind the battleships, there floated a faint greyish cloud. It indicated the transports. How many thousands of stocky little men in khaki were crammed aboard them? That was what we all wondered.

The battleships seemed to me to be coming along very leisurely compared to the third destroyer. She kept on at top speed, forty miles an hour, so I was told, till she suddenly slowed down when about half a mile north of the breakwaters. Then a string of flags fluttered up her mast, our signalmen became all activity, and answering signals were made from our cruiser in port, the *Waimaru*.

"Japs want to communicate," explained the signal boatswain. "No harm telling you that, Mister Snudden."

A naval pinnace now slipped out through an opening in our harbour booms, and dashed toward the destroyer, her prow almost buried in a bow-ridge of foaming sea. Almost immediately we saw her rounding alongside the Jap's starboard gangway, and an officer who had come off in her began to talk to one on her bridge.

Through the telescope I could see the Jap got rather excited, gesticulating freely shoreward. Then the two officers saluted, and the motor pinnace came speeding back. As we all know now, the destroyer had brought a communication from Vice-Admiral Nakamoto, Officer Commanding the hostile squadron,

demanding, under threat of bombardment, the surrender within one hour of the town and fortifications, the men-of-war in harbour, all arms and ammunition, and the payment in specie of £250,000 pounds.

The Japanese battleships were now closing the land, and about five miles away.

With my own field glass, I marked that they were stripped for action, and on deck showed absolutely nothing except their bridges—on which the chart-houses appeared to have been dismantled more or less—their turrets, the two masts with their umbrella-like tops for their fire-control stations, as I was told, and abaft the bridges the broad and absurdly short vents from the great suction gas and oil-engines below.

Looking down on the peaceful river and town that so soon were to experience all the fury, all the horrors of a bombardment, for we felt assured Nakamoto's terms were being bluntly refused, I saw that the evacuation was going on. But everything seemed very prosaic, matter-of-fact, just as we Australians have always known it would be.

The British are British all the world over; and as I cast my eye about me I thought of how the Essex men four days ago had beaten off the Germans and saved Mr. Marlborough. The thought heartened me. England, the Mother Country, would pull us through.

Her battlefleet was racing eastward to our rescue.

I saw small craft in great number working up and down our river, and trains puffing across the bridges. In our main thoroughfares working parties were carting about sand and piling it in great heaps at the street corners. Ambulance men were organizing their quarters at the principal crossings, and the fire brigade were fitting their hoses on the

main hydrants. Then I observed a small party of officers leave the fort, and cross the river in a service launch, and at once comprehended it was the General, Sir Robert Murchison, leaving with his staff. Yes! we were going to fight.

A telephone message just then informed our look-out post that the head-quarters of the military were meantime transferred to the west end of the High Street, near the New Jetty.

The *Waimura* now fired a gun to seaward, and hoisted a number of flags. A second or two later the Japanese destroyer acknowledged the signals, and dipping her ensign in salute put on full speed to rejoin her squadron.

"Yes," says some one near me, "we're going to have a knockout with these confounded little——"

§ 4

11.23.—The destroyer, ascertained to be the *Shinonome*, or *Eastern Cloud*, has rejoined her squadron that has been keeping station in a circle about four miles away. The van warship, the *Apraxin*, has hoisted three flags. We think it is the signal for action.

11.30.—The enemy are coming along under easy steam, in line ahead, their course, which Crarth says is a little west of south, will take them past our harbour just three miles away. The destroyers are not with them but are heading for the coast away up northward.

A small bright flash from the fore turret of the *Apraxin*, and a sudden droning noise greatens in the air. A geyser of sea spouts up just in front of the fort; and then comes a muffled explosion, and the deep report of a gun.

It is the first shot, 11.37 a.m.

Our fort replies. We can see the jets of fire from its turret guns and the casemates below.

The abrupt roaring of the heavy quickfirers comes up to us like peals of thunder. The *Waimura* joins in. The battleships in the offing glint with flashes of fire as their batteries pour forth deadly missiles.

Our shells are sending up spurts of water round the Japs, but we cannot see any sign of damages. There rings out the ear-splitting crash of a shell bursting on the breakwater; it brings down Messrs. Flint and Coy's 60-ton crane, and knocks a shed into a shower of splinters.

A signalman beside me reports to Crarth that he can see the hits on the fort. Dust and smoke envelope the turret, but its guns are firing steadily. Like hammer strokes they are—about one shot every thirty-seven seconds.

11.50.—The warships are now off the harbour mouth. The *Apraxin* sends a broadside between the breakwaters, and the quays burst into flame. Through my glasses, I see the plucky firemen running up with their hoses and truckfuls of sand.

11.55.—One of our 15-inch shells has wrecked Nakamoto's bridge. It appears to have tumbled down about the conning tower, and a small volume of fire breaks out amongst the wreckage. The coffin-shaped charthouse of the *Izumrud*, on the boat-deck just abaft her bridge, which has also been demolished, is smoking furiously. The fort is firing quicker, one shot in twenty seconds. How can they see to aim?—the enemy's shells burst so fast it looks as if a little volcano was in eruption down there. I notice there is a quantity of smoke over the *Waimaru*, she seems

to be on fire forward. The stubby gas-vent (funnel) of the rearmost Jap is now shot away, I can see the few feet of it remaining, all notched and jagged. She is the *Senyavin*.

The *Apraxin*, *Izumrud*, *Senyavin*, and *Nikolai I*.

Curiously indicative of the Japanese mind, and the Orientals' love for symbolism, to despatch these particular vessels against us. Theirs are the names of Russian prizes, taken in the war of 1904–5, for after the threatened outbreak of war with China in 1913, the Japs have made full use of them as historical reminders.

12.3.—There is a violent explosion amongst the houses north of High Street, behind the lighthouse. The enemy have now turned their attention to the town.

12.8.—The fight now becomes too furious for me to mark each incident minute by minute.

§ 5

The first two battleships circle opposite the town, keeping their fore and after turrets in action, and firing now with their port and now with their starboard guns as they guns bore. The other two great vessels circle NW of the fort, closing in to a range of three miles, and taking no part in the bombardment of the town but doing their best to silence our fire.

The fort is holding its own.

We sometimes can distinguish the ringing crash of the projectiles smiting its massive armour, but that its two 15-inch guns do execution is evident in the wrecked state of the enemy's vessels. The *Nikolai I's* mast has fallen over her port beam, and her great

guns forward have ceased firing. Something has been done!

The signalmen beside me point out also that the *Senyavin* must be holed on the waterline aft somewhere for she is down a little by the stern.

Their other two vessels appear to be in much safer position, but the *Waimaru* has now hauled across to the south breakwater, and is vigorously firing over it at them. The Japs pay little heed to her but are devoting themselves to shelling the town.

Their projectiles, despite the Hague Convention clauses, are apparently specially intended for such work, for on exploding they scatter a mass of incendiary composition that burns most fiercely. Water seems to have no effect on it, only sand. The fire brigade and volunteers are working hard and gallantly, exposing themselves recklessly to danger, but they cannot prevent the fire from taking hold of the town in a score of places. Crowds of fugitives come pouring up the hills. Most of them are so thoroughly scared now that they continue their flight aimlessly into the country—anywhere to be away from that terrible mixture the Japs are spouting out.

12.21—The conflagration is fiercest along the sea front and especially beside the railway quays, the Norddeutscher Lloyds' aggressively tall skyscraper becoming a vast pillar of fire and smoke. The dockyard and the heaving-down slip at Garden Island, the enemy have not touched—presumably they want to use them. Yet Messrs. Pinkterons' repairing yard seems wrecked, the north wall of the great shed blown in and the span roof tumbled down. The smoke is drifting like a dense stifling fog and hiding everything below. I am going down to see what damage has been effected.

12.28.—Just as I am leaving, from the *Apraxin* an immense flash of flame has shot into the air, dense black-brown smoke gouts forth like a gigantic mushroom springing out of her amidships. A second sheet of flame bursts from her, and she literally flies apart into pieces. We rub our eyes, but she is gone, leaving only a field of tossing sea in her place. The *Izumrud* draws off, maintaining a stubborn fire with her stern pieces.

Signal Boatswain Crarth and his men hurrah, and we idlers jump madly about with joy. Nakamoto's flagship must have been hit in her suction-gas storage and compressing chamber, the intervening bulkhead burst in with the terrific explosion, and her producers fired, magazines following suit.

Yes! The Japs are having the worst of it, so far as the actual fighting is concerned.

§ 6

I have made my way down to the nearer railway bridge. The shipping along the quays is muffled in smoke through which comes a red glare. Beyond I can see the warehouses and stores on fire. Crossing the bridge, I have run through some of the north side streets, thinking to see what I could from the sea-front.

It has just come to me that the firing has practically ceased except for the dull roaring of our 15-inch guns. On looking at my watch it registers 1 p.m.

On reaching the sea-front, I see the enemy are drawing off, the fort sending forth a few parting shots after them, but they are not replying. As our guns are last in action, and we have sunk one Jap.

and damaged her consorts we claim the victory; yet the damage they have done is excessively great, and mainly through their abominable fire-shells.

1.28.—Our last shot has been fired at the retiring Japs.

I am now inside the fort, to which the pass from headquarters has secured me admittance. One has to pick a way amongst holes torn in the ground, the great heaps of rubbish, huge shell fragments, and all the chaos wrought by the enemy's fire.

The turret has not been penetrated, but its thick armour is dinted and scarred, the points of two 11-inch shells still sticking in a well-battered section. Two men have been severely wounded by nuts, sprung off the armour inside through the tremendous impact, and five disabled with slivers.

The casemates below have suffered much heavier damage. Two of the guns have been put out of action by shells bursting in their embrasures, and 36 men killed and wounded. Almost all our gallant defenders are stone-deaf and exhausted, and many of them bleeding heavily at the ears, nose and eyelids.

The *Waimaru* has been twice on fire, ten men are killed and many wounded. Notwithstanding her decks are protected five feet deep with old junk and sacks of coal and sand, the plunging fire of the enemy has knocked her bows to pieces, two shells dropping right through all obstacles and opening up her forecastle. She cannot put to sea for months.

The loss of life in the town I am about to ascertain, also the damage and destruction of property. That may be put at between £1,300,000 and £1,500,000.

End of J. F. Snudden's Narrative.

§ 7

But while the squadron of Japanese battleships had been occupying the attention of Fremantle, transports had begun their disembarkation of troops on the beach, a few miles to the northward.

A cruiser and five torpedo craft had stood in and driven off with their quickfirers a force of mounted scouts watching the coastline; a strong party of seamen with machine guns had been sent ashore; and then the transports having closed in on shoaling soundings the troops were swiftly landed in sampans and canvas boats and floats crowded to their utmost.

The scouts were able for a time to watch the disembarkation, but at last had to retire on the Japanese advance pushing inland.

The Island Continent was at last invaded.

That which saner-minded Britons, at home and overseas, had long foreseen was now come to pass.

Yet West Australia, though crippled through lack of the reinforcements denied her by sister States—wholly set upon their own individual safety—did not abandon as vigorous a defensive as she could possibly enter upon.

§ 8

That same night of June 30, the two torpedo craft which had sustained no damage during the bombardment, having been withdrawn up-river, behind Rocky Bay, slipped out to sea together with two motor pinnaces that had been hastily fitted as mine-carriers.

The flotilla passed wide to the northward of Rottnest Island, and, in that confusing twilight preceding the dawn for a brief time, it attacked the Japanese transports still close inshore. Coming down with its four

units in scattered formation, west to north, it certainly accomplished much to maintain British prestige.

The transport, *Manchu Maru*, was sunk, with heavy stores and medical necessities, together with members of the Quartermaster's staff, and the *Taiko Maru* with her port shoulder and bow stove in by the *Wanneroo's* brace of torpedoes had to run herself ashore. Yet of the flotilla only the *Mondurah* made Fremantle in the morning, with the rising water beginning to impede the working of her motors, and thirty feet of her stern blown away; and she claimed to have torpedoed the *Senyavin*, which battleship certainly was never seen again by either side.

At 10.24 a.m. that day, the *Nikolai I* and *Izumrud* were marked south a mile or so off Rottnest Island, and the smoke of other ships, conjectured to be transports, was espied out in the offing to the northwest. Fremantle sprang to its feet to resist a fresh attack. But a little after midday the enemy's two battleships drew away south, and later in the afternoon Rockingham reported they had flung a few shells into the town, but fortunately only the Chinese quarter and the shipping had been set on fire. Other vessels were hovering on the horizon. It looked like another disembarkation, or was it but a feint?

Of the Japanese force landed to northward, little was known as yet, the enemy having thrown out a very strong line of outposts that effectually screened their operations.

That their landing was being completed had been verified by General Murchison's scouts, and by the naval small craft working northward inshore for observation and news of the missing torpedo boats. From their report of the mastheads being visible of

another transport sunk in eight fathoms, it was correctly inferred that the mine-carriers, of which no traces could be found, had materially assisted in the attack over-night.

As the Japanese pushed inland, it became evident that coastal bases were not their objective. They were acting on information of the refusal of sister States to reinforce West Australia, and were intending to strike at her heart—Perth—situated so near the coast.

All day on July 1, along their extended front, the Mounted Rifle Volunteers maintained a ceaseless skirmishing, and lost many men through carelessness and, above all, no co-operation in attack. From lack of discipline, of steadiness and adequate military training, they wasted their strength and several opportunities of sending an attack home. Steadily, irresistibly, the little yellow men drove the British irregulars before them.

The guerillas claimed they had inflicted a severe loss on the enemy; but as the Commander-in-Chief, who had hurried to the front, abruptly reminded their commanding officer that evening, the line of Japanese outposts was now six miles nearer Perth.

"I don't want brag, but results," Murchison's staff heard him volley into the receiver of the field wireless telephone connecting the Australian front.

§ 9

Leisurely, securely, the enemy were penetrating inland, their forces calculated to be between 16,000–18,000 men.

No occasion for them to strike with vehement rapidity! The sea, their rear, was held by their

navy; and the fears and dreads of the major States of the Commonwealth were to fetter British Colonial forces to local bases till the enemy's 'powerful fleets to eastward' came to an abrupt end.

At 9 a.m. on July 2, came news that fugitives from Guildford, up the River Swan, were pouring into Perth. Two Japanese battalions had occupied the town after a short skirmish with three companies of the Mounted Rifles. The railway and telegraph and telephone wires were cut. And now, save for wireless communications, the state capital was isolated on the land side. The enemy were now pushing forward in a long line, their right on the low hills near the shore, and the heads of their columns strung out over a front of eight miles inland.

The West Australian Commander-in-Chief himself reconnoitred their advance, while officers' patrols collected all possible information.

The open character of the country—undulating arable land, with pastures, and belts of trees—made communication between the enemy's columns very easy. Flags were wagging, and heliostats flashing, and occasionally, so British field-centre telephones recorded, shreds of Japanese voices could be heard in communication by means of etheric telephony. With the exception of a few mounted orderlies they appeared to have no cavalry with them. Each column was made up of four battalions with four batteries of field artillery. At first it was thought the columns were much stronger; but in time it was ascertained that with each of them a large body of pack-laden coolies were marching in close order. In the rear were also trains of pack animals.

Now and then a column halted and deployed, throw-

ing forward a cloud of skirmishers to drive off the Mounted Rifles. This caused delay, but, then, the Japanese were in no haste. Slowly, surely, they were closing in to striking distance upon Perth.

At 1.35 p.m. that afternoon, the enemy pointedly demonstrated their military capacity.

All at once the right centre column brought one of its batteries into action on the left, keen eyes having detected a couple of hundred men of the M.R.V. moving under the screen of a thick belt of blue-gum trees. The guns opened out with such amazing rapidity that one had almost thought the outburst of 12-pounder shrapnel had come from the heavens. In the storm of shell sweeping amongst the trees, many men fell from their saddles, and mounts untrained for such an experience scattered in wild flight. The Japanese threw a round of shell after them completing their rout.

Yet the Volunteers did not lose their nerve, though very few of them had ever heard the report of hostile cannon. They rallied, and came into action later on. But neither officers nor men forgot the lesson which they had been taught.

§ 10

On the evening of July 2, the following information came in to General Murchison, who was now rapidly concentrating all his forces to oppose the Japanese advance.

The enemy had drawn together in two masses, the columns on right and left joining hands. They had thrown forward a strong outpost line, and the Mounted Rifles had come upon another line guarding their

northerly flank. The Japanese were bivouacking on ground familiar to many of the colonial soldiers; so General Murchison at once decided to attack, rather than risk the investment of Perth.

Already the troops garrisoning Fremantle were reinforcing the Perth defence, leaving Fremantle to be held by its fort's garrison, and the irregular levies and rifle clubs. This reinforcement of the Perth battalions put 5,556 bayonets at the Commander-in-Chief's immediate disposal. The mounted troops, and levies of irregulars and rifle clubs, together with the artillery, were retained for the immediate defence of the capital. There, frantic efforts were being continued in improvising means of resistance, which, owing to the open nature of the town, chiefly consisted of sandbag batteries, commanding the main points and river, together with acres of wire entanglements strengthened by trees laid boughs outwards, zareba fashion, and laced with barbed wire.

The night was very cloudy, with a heavy rain steadily falling. At 11.30 as the troops formed up in front of the various buildings that had been converted into temporary barracks, excited crowds gathered about them, and the police reinforced by the military guards had difficulty in keeping a clear way for them. By 9.20 the strong cordon of Mounted Rifles now holding the exits of the city night and day, had already shot six spies endeavouring to gain the open, and arrested four others pending inquiries.

At 11.18 the column closely locked was on the move. General Murchison accompanied it on foot, with the advanced guard. It was with much effort the officers succeeded in maintaining silence and preventing all covert attempts at smoking. But before the first half-

hour was over, the troops had settled down into a steady tramp through the wet night along the road through Balcutta.

Past deserted houses, through the street of a township where lights shone in windows and frightened and anxious faces peered out—past farmsteads where all stock and supplies had been cleared away, and not even a dog barked—the little column went forward to victory or defeat.

Though the march was just about seven miles to the point of attack, it seemed endless.

There were halts, when whispered rumours flew down the column that they were in contact with the enemy, but almost instantly the order was passed to move on again, and weary men pulled themselves together, vaguely longing for a chance of resting. Then the sniping of the Mounted Rifles, constantly harassing the Japanese outposts, came on the ear, and grew more distinct. It was there in front, where the faint glare of the enemy's camp-fires tinged the stormy darkness.

There was another halt, and as the tramping of the men died down, the dropping fire ahead seemed to die down also save for a spasmodic crackling away to the right; and by means of the night-glasses, it was possible to see the little jets of flame from the snipers' rifles. They appeared to be very near.

It was then every one awoke to realize there was really to be a fight, and this within the next few minutes.

To the left of the brigade, a light was twinkling in a bungalow near the road, and a droning song filtered through the gusts of wind and rain. A staff officer thrust himself through the broken-down paling, pushed in the door, and found—three bandoliered Mounted

Rifles, bareheaded and with tunics loosened, sitting round a table, whereon were a candle stuck on a corner of it, a bottle of whisky and a pack of cards. So engrossed were they that the officer entered without being heard.

"What's this?" came the stern, angered voice. "If the Commander-in-Chief hears of this you'll be shot, and well you deserve it. Do ye call this the front, sergeant?"

"We ain't no reg'lars, Mr. Officer-man, an' don' you forget it, so chaw up. If ye don't——"

But the sergeant, who had been staring at the table in silence, his bronzed face flushing and eyes lowered, suddenly sprang to his feet, and hit the trooper a blow on the jaw that knocked him off his rickety chair.

"It was that blasted gab of yours, Jeck, that brought us in here," he burst out with, the next moment to salute the officer apologetically.

"Beg pardon, sir, but I couldn't help it. We felt used up a bit, an' as the Japs withdrew their outpost down the road behind the crest o' ground, we comes in here for bit an' sup 'fore joining up with the rest of our company at Winton's Farm. Didn't think much wrong 'bout a drop of whisky an' five minutes at the cards."

"'Didn't think much wrong, sergeant,'" answered the staff officer hotly, "it's just because you didn't think more that this has happened. If it creeps out what'll the Country think, what will the Old Country and the Japanese think?—drinking and playing cards instead of being on duty at the front. It is not you that suffer for this but the whole of us British Colonials. . . . I'd sooner be shot for cowardice than do such a thing as this. . . . No, sergeant, I shall say nothing, meantime.

But it is through sheer thoughtlessness on your part, and that is more damning than incompetency. . . . Put out the light—fall in on the rear of the column now passing."

§ II

Officers of companies and divisions led their men out on to the rolling pasture land, that in front rose into a long swell. A line of half battalion columns was formed, each half battalion in column of companies with, behind it, one of the battalions massed in the same formation as a reserve. The Commander-in-Chief first passed along the front, to make certain that in the darkness all his columns really faced the same direction; then came the low order, 'Fix bayonets,' and 'Forward. By the right.'

The slope was of the gentlest, but to the troops moving up it the soft wet slippery ground made it seem like a steep hill. It was fortunate that as the sergeant had said there were no snipers on the crest of it ahead.

The line of skirmishers were now gathering further away to the right where they were obtaining more cover, and diverting the attention of the Japanese from the grounds near the road.

General Murchison had despatched his chief staff officer, Colonel J. C. Plowden, to lead the reserve battalions, and he himself was at the head of the half battalion on the right. As he had rightly judged, his post was not in the rear, as according to modern developments, but leading the forlorn hope. A forlorn hope this attack was most certainly.

As he topped the wave of ground, he saw the fires of the enemy's bivouac, for as there was abundance of timber the Japanese were freely using it to make themselves comfortable.

The ground sloped down towards their encampment, that was yet a mile away though it looked but a few hundred yards. Defined indistinctly against the light of the fires, a clump of gum trees stood in front of the attack, not 150 feet distant.

Out of their darkness a voice called something unintelligible to British ears; then came the challenge afresh, in English, to be instantly followed by the flash and bang of a rifle, its bullet whistling overhead. The Japanese outpost, below the crest of ground, having withdrawn on the skirmishers pressing home an hour or so past, had marked the attack against the sky line which much helped their eyes.

At the same moment, the alarm was given towards the middle of the advance.

A group thrown out along the road, in front of the half battalion there, had come face-to-face with a patrol of Japanese going out to the front.

The enemy had heard the sounds of footsteps, and had halted; they were within ten paces of the tall colonials, when the two parties marked each other. The Japanese instantly fired, and three men of the British group dropped to the ground; but the others sprang at the enemy with levelled bayonets, and a hand-to-hand struggle ensued in the dark.

As the alarm rang out the leading company on the road doubled to the front, there was a moment or two of confusion; then a Japanese prisoner was hurled aside by his captors sweeping onward. The rest of his comrades lay dead.

The attack was now advancing at the run.

Of the Japanese outpost at the trees one man was bayoneted in the chest, and the others fled back upon their main forces.

A spatter of fire came from them, then a crashing volley from a picket somewhere near the centre. A pandemonium of yells and cries arose as a half battalion dashed into it; and the Japanese fighting fiercely with bayonet and rifle-butt were overwhelmed through sheer weight and impetus of the attack.

Irresistibly it seemed, the Colonial brigade swept into the enemy's lines.

There were only six minutes between the first shots and the general attack; yet notwithstanding the advance had been so rapidly hurled against the Japanese, they did not appear to lose their nerve. Even as their bugles had soared vehemently, they had sprung to their feet, swiftly unpiled their arms, and faced front, fixing bayonets as they fell into formation, companies closing up shoulder to shoulder.

What took place now cannot be described in detail; it was a wild nightmare of bloody strife. The colonials cheering fiercely and mad with fighting fever, charged against human walls bristling with bayonets. Steel crossed steel, men struggled hand to hand. Cries of agony, shouts, curses, a din of terrible sounds.

And then the leading lines at each point of contact mingled in a swaying mass.

One column burst through a slender defence, and found themselves trampling hot embers and scattering burning branches in their headlong charge, driving before them a panic-stricken crowd of men and animals A cheer broke from the attack. They thought they were routing soldiers, but immediately perceived they had fallen on the unarmed transport corps of coolies With wonderful readiness they halted at the word of command, and wheeled in formation to look for the enemy in their rear. Roaring 'Banzai,' a dense body

of Japanese dashed at them, broke into their ranks; and again the desperate encounter was renewed.

Colonel Plowden, in command of the reserve, had, as ordered, led his force round the right flank of the attack, hoped to strike at any reserve the Japanese might be forming behind the confusing fight. He could distinguish very little of its details, but his hearing helped him to locate its limits. Then suddenly there was an explosion overhead, and a ghostly white flare lit up the scene.

Great white stars drifted slowly through the night to be succeeded by others, as the enemy's gunners sent up rounds of star shells; and for a minute the entire battlefield was illumed as if by bright moonlight.

Along a front of three-quarters of a mile, great irregular masses of fighting men were distinctly made out. It was seen that the Japanese engaged in the battle were being forced back, for on the side of the fight furthest from the camp men lay scattered on the ground, dead and dying. Behind the struggling lines some of the bivouac fires were blazing up; and beyond them Plowden got a glimpse of the Japanese in reserve, standing steady, and arranged, as if on review—two battalions in line, with twelve guns unlimbered in battery between them.

Only half of the enemy's forces were actually engaged.

Swiftly Plowden concluded that to take the ground between the men engaged and their formidable reserve would draw the fire of their guns at close quarters, and court extermination. He therefore threw half his battalion into the fight on the right, that this move might roll up the enemy's frontal line and force it

back upon its support. The other half of his battalion he kept in reserve.

His men responded splendidly to his appeal. In they went, and under the impetus of their charge the mass on the right was pushed back. The Commander-in-Chief extricated himself from the press together with two of his staff, all of them streaming with blood from cuts, their helmets gone, and uniforms slashed and torn.

By now a company detached from Colonel Plowden's reserve had opened fire on the enemy's reserve, and on their further right the Mounted Rifles, who had now come in, strengthened their comrades' skirmishing.

Then in the darkness again prevailing, except for the feeble light of the camp fires, the hubbub of hand-to-hand fighting broke out on the extreme Japanese left, where a battalion of theirs had doubled forward, and dashed in amongst the Mounted Rifles and skirmishers. The scattered men were bayoneted and forced back. The Commander-in-Chief and Colonel Plowden led the last reserve, three companies, to meet this new attack; but the enemy's weight, and, above all, the numbers were not to be withstood.

There ensued amongst the British a horrible sense of being hustled backward by a monstrous and irresistible force intent on human massacre.

There was no unbroken company to receive or execute an order. Each man had to act for himself against the skilled bayonet fighters and wrestlers who were at close grips with him in the night. Only to the extreme right where the Mounted Rifles were reforming and pouring in a hot fire was the crackle of guns heard. Elsewhere, it was the old savage combat, body writhing against body, fighting with cold steel and tearing, suffocating hands.

It seemed an age till the fighting began to die down and groups of men, in utter exhaustion, drew out of it, hardly aware of what had happened save that they were still alive.

Backwards, the British streamed towards the ridge, from which the attack had started. To the call of surviving officers and non-coms., they rallied and formed in small bodies, front to the foe. Some tied up wounds in head or arm with handkerchiefs, and here and there men were staggering and falling, their comrades trying to assist them.

And away out of the darkness ahead came the ringing bugle calls of the Japanese. But—they, too, were reforming. Not pursuing.

The edge of West Australia's mettle had proved keen —retributive. Yet her Commander-in-Chief and most of his staff lay amongst her 869 dead and dying, under the night enveloping that hard-fought right flank. He had died as he had always wished. His wisdom of attacking the invaders may be impeached by arm-chair critics; but they doubtless would also carp and cavil if he had allowed the Japanese to force a fight in broad daylight on a front he could not defend with his few thousands of troops.

As the chief of the staff busied himself in getting the troops reformed, he indistinctly overheard a sergeant replying to a comrade, who was binding up his forehead.

" What's that you said, my man ? " asked Plowden, wheeling abruptly.

" Said, we've done our best, an' no one can do more."

" It's not our best we've got to do, but whip the enemy," the Colonel stormed at him. " Get the men formed over the ridge, or the Japs 'll be round-

set in, the roads became impassable, and the low-lying streets of the capital were flooded.

However, if the movements of flying columns were now impossible, so was a sustained aggressive by the Japanese.

The enemy had crossed the Rio Grande immediately on defeating Colonel Wilson, and, driving some minor U.S. detachments before them, pushed south along the railroad to Calocan. Thence they, and the Philippinos whom they had armed and were rapidly organizing, worked east and south till they occupied a number of points from Calocan on the railway, north of Manila, round by San Juan del Monte, and the banks of the Pasig river to Santa Mesa near the sea and south of the capital.

But a force of Japanese seizing Malabon was effectually shelled out of it by the small naval force in Manila Bay—the second-class cruiser, *Ossabaw*, and the gunboats, *Henry Kendrick* and the *Machias*.

And owing to the operations of this little flotilla strengthened by the old *Kentucky* depôt vessel at Cavite, together with two torpedo boats and other small craft hastily refitted in the new Navy Yard at Canacao Bay, Cavite—Manila though beset to landward still remained open to the sea. Yet if the Japanese squadron and torpedo flotilla, that had been reported on June 20 as being off Agarri in North Luzon made a descent on the American capital, the situation would be exceeding serious.

§ 1

On June 24, however, three liners of the New York Panama and San Francisco Company steamed triumphantly into Manila Bay from Honolulu, convoyed

by the U.S.A. first-class cruiser, *Brooklyn*, whose broken bows, wrecked gas vent and amidship battery, told how gallantly she had repelled the Japanese cruisers, *Chiyoda* and destroyers, *Murasame* and *Hayatori*, as she with her convoy had opened out Takao Island on emerging from the San Bernardino Straits.

The transports brought three infantry battalions —of the 20th U.S.A. Regulars and the 2nd and the 3rd Hawaiian Volunteers—one volunteer battery of 4-inch quick-firing guns, engineer and ambulance detachments, and stores from the Hawaii garrison. With these reinforcements General Westley needed no incentive from the Governor to do something to break the self-confidence of the assertive enemy.

The sternwheelers, *Corregidor* and *Viajero*, now converted into gunboats armed with light Q.F. guns and pom-poms, ascended the Pasig river, and with them was sent, partly in a flotilla of lighters, barges, and harbour motor boats, and partly by road, a brigade commanded by Magrudder now promoted to his colonelcy. It was made up of the following,—the 20th Infantry, the remnant of the 5th, the 2nd Hawaiians and their volunteer battery.

For once the Japanese were caught napping, having no expectation that the small U.S.A. forces would take the offensive.

At Guadaloupe village, the U.S.A. flotilla was heavily fired on, a couple of small guns coming into action. The *Corregidor* and *Viajero* standing in on the bank replied at close range, and smartly the troops were disembarked, scrambling ashore breast high through sludge and water, to close in on the east side of the village. Already the companies of the 20th and 2nd Infantry, marching on a parallel with the river, were

energetically working through the bush on its west and north. A summons to the Japanese for surrender was answered with yells of defiance.

The fire redoubled—a thunder of sharp detonations, a rattling roar of machine gun fire on the river and the bank—a crackle of rifles all round in the bush on the land side. Suddenly the *Corregidor* was enveloped in steam; a shell had burst in her boiler-room, and shattered tubes and steam pipes were vomiting out scalding death; agonized men scrambled out of the death cloud, and fell on the deck. Her engine-room compartment, burst in on the water line, was rapidly filling. But her cables roared through the hawse holes, her anchors sinking in the deep mud; and swinging to the stream, she settled in four feet of water, and kept her guns in action.

The steady resistance to the land attack showed that Japanese regulars were being engaged; but outnumbered, and encountering a scathing fire, in twenty minutes they were forced back into the village.

The guns of the volunteer battery had now been landed and were being dragged along the muddy bush track; but before they came into action the gunboats' shells had already fired the palm-leaf roofs; and swiftly Guadeloupe became a mass of writhing smoke and flame. Yet ever from its outskirts the fire of the Japanese rifles answered the American sharpshooters.

Two companies of the 20th, working along the river margin, many of them wading in the yellow swirl of water below the bank, pushed their way into the river-side corner of the burning village.

Met by a handful of Japanese, they bayonetted most of them, not without loss. Then fifty yards away they saw the enemy's guns firing from behind

a rough adobe breastwork; a litter of dead and wounded men lay behind them; one of them had been dismounted, and the brawny little gunners were frantically working to remount it. The other was now firing slowly—carriers struggled to bring the fixed ammunition in baskets.

A volley from the leading files of the attack rolled over several of them. The gunboats ceased their fire for a moment; and cheering madly the Americans were instantly on the guns with the bayonet. The fight lasted but a minute.

A Japanese artillery captain, his khaki jacket bright with a row of medal ribbons, fired rapidly with his revolver and shot down three of the attack, then turning the weapon on himself fell beside his guns, his left temple shattered.

The hot blaze of the village was dying down. Roofs had swiftly burned away, and cane and bamboo framed huts been consumed to the ground; but there remained a tangle of streets among the roofless mud walls; and out of them rose two Spanish-built houses of stone that had resisted the conflagration.

On one of them still flew the Sun Flag of Japan, that Flag which has known but very few defeats.

The volunteer battery and the gunboats made these houses their target—one which was plain and unmistakable. The regulars and volunteers after clearing the rest of the village took what cover they could, and rained bullets on doors, windows and verandahs.

From one of the houses, a party of Japanese dashed out upon the Hawaiians. So unexpected was the sortie that the Volunteers gave way, then immediately rallying closed with their assailants. Men came hurrying from right and left to help their comrades, a reserve

company doubled up from the rear. Among the ruined houses and in a low-walled garden were five minutes of desperate hand-to-hand fighting. Most of the Japanese fell and a few got back to the houses. Fewer still were prisoners.

Colonel Magrudder now ceased fire, and sent forward a flag of truce to the Japanese commandant. In a briefly scribbled note he told him he had made a splendid defence but his position was hopeless; he urged him to surrender and save brave lives from useless sacrifice.

The answer came back, "We fight to the end."

"They're keen on bushido," grunted the Colonel, wiping the sweat out of his grimy eyes. "Very well, they'll take it then. Sappers to the front."

A party of them then worked up under cover, close to the most eastward of the houses; then with a rush placed a heavy charge of dynamite against a corner of it, lit the fuse and retired, dragging away three wounded men of the party.

A crashing explosion instantly followed a rumbling downfall of masonry, and through the yawning gap, before the smoke and dust of the explosion had cleared, a mixed crowd of regulars and bluejackets dashed into the building. Three minutes after a soldier appeared on the roof, and 'struck' the Japanese flag, amidst a storm of bullets from the other house.

Then from the other house the fire ceased.

The engineers were going forward to dynamite it also, when from an open window something white was hung out on a bayonet; and Magrudder ordered the cease fire. The Japanese were surrendering.

None who saw the interior of that house ever forgot the horrors it revealed. Only fifty officers and men

had held it. Ten or twelve had fallen under the fire of the attack ; three officers and twenty men had ripped themselves up rather than surrender, and lay dead or near to death, in pools of blood here and there in the darkened rooms, behind the barricaded windows. Less than a score, three sergeants among them, survived the surrender.

The village had been held by a company of Japanese infantry, a score of gunners, and fifty Philippinos. There were less than eighty prisoners, only half of them Japanese.

Of the invaders nearly two hundred had fallen in the desperate defence or died by their own hands. The victory cost the Americans one hundred casualties. Yet it was something material to have struck a blow at last, destroyed a hostile detachment and taken two guns—proof of victory to Manila's disaffected population—above all, to have broken through the line of investment and cleared the Pasig river.

The *Viajero*, with part of the flotilla, pushed on to Pasig village ; she then entered the shallow waters of the wide Bai lake, relieved and brought off an American detachment that was being hard pressed by the insurgents at Santa Cruz on its eastern shore. Then, having left a fortified post at Pasig and a second at Guadaloupe, Magrudder returned to Manila.

§ 2

As if stung into action by the disaster on the Pasig, the enemy now became more active against the capital. Every night an attack was expected. There was incessant sniping in the outskirts, and hardly a night

on which some long ranging shells of small calibre were not thrown into the city.

Inside its walls there were outbreaks of fire, which were clearly the work of incendiaries. At Corregidor Island the searchlights played constantly across the entrance to the Bay of Manila; the gunners slept at their posts in the two batteries, one low down near the water, the other high up and ready to bring a plunging fire on hostile decks. At Cavite, modern batteries just lately rearmed with heavy guns and howitzers were ready to deal with a close attack.

Small as the naval force available was, it would have been an ugly business for any squadron that challenged Manila from the seaward. Doubtless this was why the threatened attacks from the Japanese cruiser squadron remained uneffected.

But on the 30th the city awoke to the booming of the big guns at Corregidor. The rumour ran that the Japanese fleet was coming at last. Revealed in the white rays of the searchlights a flotilla of six long destroyers were seen racing for the Boca Grande, the entrance of the bay.

The batteries of Corregidor opened on them with their far-ranging guns. Other guns on Caballo and Fraile islands crossed their fire, with a rapid discharge from lighter pieces. Before the flotilla had passed the Boca, one of them had turned back crippled, escaping only because the gunners were busy with those that held on. Two more had disappeared in a burst of steam as they sank riddled by exploding shells. Only three entered the bay.

The American flotilla had headed for Corregidor at the first alarm, and the crowds who hurried to the wharves could see their searchlights sweeping the dark waters,

a long ray from the huge ten-feet projector on the fort at Cavite playing on the sea along its southern shore. It was in this beam that the enemy's destroyers, second division, were first revealed as they crept in.

The American destroyers darted at them. There was a splutter of quickfirers. In the streaming light of the projectors, the destroyer, *Cushing*, was seen sinking, a huge smoking gap in her side. One of the Japanese, leaking in half a dozen places, was heading for the shallows; the two others emerging from the fight were dashing for the cruisers, under a tornado of machine-gun fire and small shells from their lighter guns. Using their high speed they circled through the storm of projectiles, and loosed off their torpedoes. Then one of them was marked drifting helplessly about and the other heading for the Boca in full retreat, with the surviving American boat, the *Fulton*, in pursuit. The *Ossabaw*, torpedoed in her after starboard side, was getting out her collision mats, and heading for Cavite.

The surviving destroyer of the enemy escaped as by a miracle, running the gauntlet of the Boca batteries again successfully. Her maimed consort, that had turned seaward at the outset, also got away. But two boats of the attack had been sunk, and two more in a damaged state, one of them with her bows awash, were the prizes of the U.S.A. squadron.

§ 3

The arrival of the ss. *Golden Gate*, the following afternoon, with a battalion of 1st Wyoming Volunteers and eighty men of the Garrison Artillery, brought news of a mishap in the Pacific.

The *Golden Gate* had left San Francisco with four consorts conveying a brigade of Californian, Wyoming and Idaho Volunteers. As no modern cruiser could be spared in convoy, of a speed equal to theirs, it had been deemed judicious not to encumber them with the doubtful protection of a slow and antiquated warship like the *Missouri*.

Honolulu the five transports had reached in safety, but south-east of Guam they had been chased by a Japanese squadron of three second-class cruisers, thought to be of the *Mikado* type. With difficulty the *Golden Gate* had escaped, after jettisoning much of her cargo of ammunition and stores, and a considerable quantity of her oil, carried in her double bottom for propelling her engines.

Small as the reinforcement was, Governor Widdner was exceeding glad of it; but in vain did the great wireless station at Cavite send out its vast herzian waves, calling up the *Golden Gate's* consorts, the *British King*, *British Queen*, *San Diego*, and *Republic of Chili*. Not till the conclusion of the war was their fate to be known.

CHAPTER VI

AS THE GREAT WHEEL TURNED

THE world hostilities of 1920 had many surprises, yet perhaps the most startling of them was the great German defeat in Eastern France. The most the friends of France had hoped for was that after a prolonged struggle She could have gained a hard-won victory.

To Germans, the first news from the seat of the war had seemed to presage easy successes.

Immediately on the declaration of war, the Kaiser had been able to date his despatches from Nancy, the old capital of Lorraine, telling how brilliantly the soldiers of the Fatherland had stormed the plateau of La Haye and driven the French back under the guns of Toul. And then had come the gratifying news of the commencement of the attack on Toul, and the capture of two of its outlying forts; also the news of the German armies pouring into the gap between Toul and Epinal, together with their claim of victory throughout this new advance—a claim confirmed by the train-loads of French prisoners sent into Germany. Without a doubt, the French had been surprised and forced to succumb to the onset of the Kaiser's soldiers.

At Berlin, then, though the public were fully aware of the growing difficulties created by the Social Democrats' and Internationalists' opposition to the mobiliza-

tion, and their part-success towards a general strike at home and abroad, it was thought the Kaiser was proving strong enough to repress disorder at home and win a series of splendid triumphs in the field. Twice, by his order, had the capital been illuminated, to celebrate the victories of La Haye and Mirecourt. Yet when the first convoy of French prisoners arrived at the Potsdam station, to be marched between files of guards with fixed bayonets along the Koniggrätzer Strasse, past the empty French embassy on the Parisier Platz, then down the Unter den Linden and across the river to the Artillery Barracks, the populace had mostly looked on in silence. 'Out of respect for the misfortunes of our brave enemies,' said the official press.—'In their disgust at the war,' said the proletariat organs.

§ 1

It was that same day, the official bulletins announced that the German armies were steadily forcing the French back in the Faucilles; yet on the morrow came no official tidings of victory, but instead ominous rumours were rapidly spreading everywhere. Though the censorship rigorously enforced prevented their general publication, in a special edition of the *Vorwärts* —which journal was promptly suppressed by the police and its staff and printer imprisoned—was published the following information:

> From authentic sources comes corroboration that not only have mere outpost affairs of ours been magnified into victories for us, but that the army has failed to break through the French lines. It has suffered a most serious and decisive defeat.

> We are ready to lay down our lives in defence of our beloved Fatherland, but we protest vehemently against aggression against our neighbour states, great or small. Our protest is voiced by the strikes now taking place with us, and, we aver, about to be put in force by our comrades in even the contesting nations. It is the part of Social Democrats to complete the downfall of militarism. Hoch, for the world-wide strikes—for the universal peace. Hoch, for the Social Revolution at last. The Great Awakening. It spreads. It spreads.

The rest of the world, as we know, had already learned the truth.

The Kaiser had imperilled all upon one desperate cast. He had assured himself, and the War Council, that the order for mobilization would march the malcontents into the barracks, and that once there they would cease to be dangerous—become mere individual units at the beck of his officers. He had counted on the war fever silencing all opposition. Above all, he had relied that 'My Fatherland, right or wrong,' would be the feeling of every German; that triumphs in the field would silence discontent for years to come—just as in the past Sadowa had won full and immediate amnesty for Bismarckism and set it up for that decade as patriotism essential to Germany.

It came then, when the mobilization order had been answered by the Social Democrats' call for a general strike, it was too late for Germany to draw back. To hesitate was to enable France and England and Holland to place their last man and last gun in line. And there, too, lay the tempting gap in the French frontier barrier. The battalions of Germany would fight the steadier if the regulars were not encumbered

with a multitude of reservists. The swifter the blow, the greater the chance of victory. Forward then. And thus it was the 'War-Lord' had succumbed to the war-fever in his own veins.

But, as already told, the French resistance had developed with amazing rapidity into a general counter attack. When, on that third evening of the Débâcle, the pressure of the Army of the Jura had disorganized the main German attack, and from northward tidings had come that the French were no longer standing on the defensive along the heights of the Marne, but were advancing through the intervals in the barrier line—while Verdun seemed to have awakened to sudden activity, and was pouring out a new army on the extreme left—the Kaiser and his headquarter staff awakened to realize their daring advance had failed; and that to hold their positions in the Faucilles threatened a Sedan, with the parts reversed.

Strong rearguards had been left to cover the retirement, to sacrifice themselves if need be to save the army; and through the darkness under the deluge of rain, the retreating columns had wearily plodded towards the crossings of the Moselle; vast streams of men, guns, and horses, every man realizing that this was defeat at last. Not till the Moselle was passed, was there any rest for the remnants of the German army that had fought so bravely among the Faucilles.

But already the French had ceased the pursuit. They had gathered trophies enough in the guns, and prisoners, taken as they had pressed upon and overwhelmed the rearguards. Their victorious energies were exhausted before daylight filled the hollow of the sky.

§ 2

To the German nation then the truth of the situation stood revealed.

A desperate effort was made by the Government to rally the anti-militarists to the defence of the Empire. At Berlin a monster peace meeting had been hurriedly called together in the Thiergarten; and to the public surprise it was announced the police were not to interfere with it. On the night before the meeting the Imperial Chancellor, Graf von Maxenstein, asked the Socialist leaders to a private conference at his residence. By coming to it, the Socialists were assured they were not pledging themselves to recognition of any policy.

It was felt by Socialists and Internationalists alike that capitulation of the Government was possible. Already the declarations of the National-Labour Party, together with the resolution of the delegates of the great Trades Unions in Britain, and of the major (Socialist) labour machine in the United States of America, to ballot their members regarding a 'combined strike' against the prosecution of military hostilities had vindicated the attitude of their comrades throughout the Germanic Empire.

VON MAXENSTEIN.—I speak to you, Herr Kaps, and Doctor Holzamer, and you, Herr Fleischbruke, not as a member of His Majesty's Government, but as a fellow citizen. I know we have all the same ideal —the good of the Fatherland and the people. . . . Let us face the facts.

This strike you have entered on, I grant you, is likely to extend its ravages on our national strength. Its avowed object is peace? Well, I say from my heart,

I have now the same object in view—peace, an honourable peace, obtained at the earliest possible date. There is no question of aggression now. We are concerned with the defence of our frontiers, irrespective of what our gallant naval forces effect in the Atlantic. . . . With the army raised to full war strength and order in our cities, and the Landwehr partly mobilized, we shall be able to negotiate an armistice. But we must be strong, strong on land, to make France listen to reason. In this war, the final victory does not rest on the command of the sea. We are not in the same case, in that respect, with England and Japan. They must fight it out. I ask you for support to the new policy of the Government, which is for peace, an honourable peace, as I have said—for your stoppage of the strike and acceptance of the mobilization order.

DOCTOR HOLZAMER.—A truce at home as the step to an armistice arranged through friendly Powers?

VON MAXENSTEIN.—So. A truce at home. Do you stand to your programme of educating the people to your ideas or—do you risk civil war? I say advisedly, civil war. His Majesty can, if he so desire it, obtain peace without the agency of any political party. . . . And the Army, indignant at being abandoned to their fate, will accept a policy of repression. You understand? It is a grave question.

HERR FLEISCHBRUKE.—Don't threaten, Herr Chancellor. It is dangerous.

So the debate went on. The delegates averred they could promise nothing. They had to consult their council, and would give their answer to the meeting.

§ 3

Next day, July 2, bore fresh news of the rapid spread of the strike. In the cities and industrial districts where the order to stop work had been most generally obeyed, the ominous calm was deepening. Traffic was continued with difficulty on the railways; and at Essen a call for a large delivery of shell could not be executed, the workshops were so thoroughly disorganized.

From abroad came information of the far-reaching results of the great defeat.

The Hollanders were closing the sluices, the inundation would soon be falling fast, and the tremendous task of von Drachenstein's engineers, to divert the Rhine into the Waal and Yssel, rendered wholly useless. Along the lines of Utrecht a burst of activity was reported, pointing to the garrisons assuming a vigorous offensive.

But the news that produced deepest alarm and consternation in Rhein Preussen and Hessen-Nassau, were these telling that Belgium was throwing down the gauntlet of war.

The young king had made the army his hobby, and had often taken command at the annual manœuvres. Hitherto the Belgian forces had had no chance of distinction except in colonial skirmishes. There was now an opportunity for effective military action with the scantiest risk of misadventure, and the possibility that when the Dutch succession came to be settled, the crowns of Holland and Belgium might both be his. There had been a growing agitation in Belgium for intervention. Suddenly the King declared that although he was the ruler of a neutralized state he could not be deaf to the call of his people

for action. Parliament was called to meet to grant supplies, but meanwhile the vast resources of the fortune of his house would be utilized in meeting the first expenditure of the campaign.

The same Gazette published the declaration of war against Germany. It also contained the order, which had already been partly executed, for the concentration of 50,000 men based on Liège to guard the Belgo-German border on the east, while 70,000 more converged on the frontier of Brabant to march into Holland under the King's command, clear the Dutch southern provinces of the enemy, and fall on the flank of the invaders while the Dutch army attacked them in front.

On the French frontier the Army of the Ardennes had appeared before Metz, and was preparing to attack the western forts. Names famous in the old war were heard again, the French headquarters being at Rezonville; there had been an outpost fight at the ravine of Gravelotte. The Germans had thrown up advanced works along the crest of the long slope at St. Privat, where the Guard had melted away under the storm of French rifle fire on that terrible August afternoon, fifty years ago.

Nancy, the old capital of Lorraine, had been reoccupied by the 'Army of Lorraine' amid scenes of mad enthusiasm; and its 250,000 combatants were pouring over the crossings of the Meurthe. The armies of the Vosges and the Jura—500,000 men—were over the Moselle, and moving like a great living tide towards the Meurthe.

Swiftly had the Kaiser had to retire from his headquarters at Luneville, to escape being overwhelmed by the combined attack of the three converging French

armies. He was withdrawing his troops to the line of the Vosges, where a stand, resolute and desperate, was to be made among the hills.

The memory of the old harked back significantly to the cataclysm at Sedan. Was history about to repeat itself while the Fates looked on ?

§ 4

At the meeting of the Social-Democrats, Internationalists, and Trades Unionists in the Thiergarten that evening, the delegates maintained silence as to their interview with the Imperial Chancellor, but made bold and unsparing use of the revelation that the Government considered the situation to be hopeless.

" We demand peace," said Herr Fleischbruke, ex-railway clerk, now Reichstag member for Potsdam, " for the Fatherland has suffered no disgrace. Militarism only has been defeated—not Germany. We call on the people to continue their orderly and peaceful resistance against Caesarism and the curse of the sword ; and we can rely on our millions of comrades abroad in England, in Belgium and in Holland, in France, and the United States, to see no terms are proposed that will inflict lasting loss on the proletariat of Germany. Yet, if the Allies refuse the offer for an armistice to arrange peace, the war becomes one of aggression on their part, and we will have to reconsider our position. We now demand the instant convocation of the Reichstag his Majesty dissolved to prevent interference with his dictatorship. If the Ministry do not wish an armistice, then the Ministry must go. We, comrades, dictate peace."

A resolution carried with but few dissentients.

§ 5

And next morning, in the world's news, appeared more than evidence of the growing weight of German Labour, striking against the aggressive hostilities.

There were news, too, of the co-operation of their comrades in Great Britain, in France and the United States—above all, in Japan. There the growth of the socialist and proletariat parties had kept pace with the inevitable emancipation, religious and political, of her people from the fiction of a divine Emperor (wholly divested of his divinity through further Constitutional Decrees), and from the autocracy of the Japanese oligarchy that so long had held them in political bondage to the past. Commercialism kills patriotism's chivalry.

A cruel twist of Destiny's—the Kaiser, Social Democracy's lifelong enemy, to be the main factor of its World-Awakening—its titanic uprising—by his very enterprise in seeking to greaten and plant still deeper the solidarity of the Germanic Empire.

And it was that same day came the first and ominous tidings from Lisbon that swiftly greatened the national crisis in Germany. That her Government's attitude was changing became evident, when the brief news were allowed to be reproduced in full in the organs of the press.

London New York Herald. 4th Special.

From Our Own Correspondent.

KNEBWORTH CHANNON.

He wires from Lisbon half an hour ago, at 2.55 p.m.—'An awful naval contest has been fought in the south-west. This morning Loesch

and Armand de Pelley came to grips. If England's 2nd Home Fleet, last reported off Finisterre, comes along in time the Germans get wiped out. I have just rushed ashore from the *Marquez de Alvarenga* that I boarded as she came up the river flying the signals. She lay-to to witness the fearful combat, but soon had to steam away from the awful mêlée, into safety. As I write this, my agent at Cascaes 'phones that heavy firing is to be heard seaward. It is slowly approaching in the direction of the Tagus. Fort St. Julian at the mouth of the Tagus is already manned against any infringement of territorial waters.'

But it was not till late the next morning any details broke the intolerable suspense. Perhaps the abolition by international consent of press vessels in war-time does not afford that great national advantage so descanted upon by Governments at the time. In 1920 it certainly went far to obscure the real truth of the Franco-German naval engagement. The official accounts from the very nature of it are so necessarily vague.

§ 6

At 11.35 p.m., on the evening of July 2, the northerly scouts of Admiral Loesch, strengthened by the German Mediterranean squadron—that with the loss of several units had gained the Atlantic in spite of the efforts of the French to crush it, its two battleships, compensating for the *Hesse* and *Darmstadt* damaged at Portsmouth and now making to repair at their far distant Sta. Cruz base—had come in active touch with the united Atlantic and Mediterranean squadrons

of France; and at 1.23 a.m. the antagonists were closing rapidly. In light of what afterwards ensued with such a startling effect it may be noted that neither side had any hesitation in engaging.

"This is the chance, the supreme chance, we have ever aspired to in our strategics," Admiral Armand de Pelley said to his flag officers clustered round him as he lingered on the top of the fore-turret of his great flagship, *Vengeur*, and stared intently ahead to the southward for the enemy. "We will know at last if it is the night attack that compensates for their armament of great cannon."

"*Fulminant*, monsieur, reports her bridge woodwork now all cleared away," reported his Signal-Lieutenant, handing back the report slip to the orderly from the wireless cabin.

"Good! We are all now completely ready," replied the Great Officer, regenerator of France's Navy. "The *Vauban* . . . Vice-Admiral Mallarmard . . . to take in advance cruisers' messages on *Vengeur's* attune note, and if the enemy proves in line ahead to conform to orders, D instructions. It is the honour of France that is confided to him. . . . No, Monsieur Duguesclin, we must supplicate the Fates, we have neither more nor less light. There is enough for our purpose."

Though the air was calm the arch of the heavens as yet was of an indefinable hue, untinged by the pale dim rays of approaching morning. Here and there stars twinkled afar, vague and troubled, and the wisp of old moon, blurred by the strata of haze moving down the upper-currents, shed a weird, mysterious light. It was as if Nature sought to veil the monstrosities, the horrors, about to arise on the

great fleets clashing against each other. In line abreast the fourteen huge battleships, keeping station with mathematical regularity, swept onward to their fate. Dark shadows rushing forward in immense elongated masses, void of form or light save where, from the over-pressed furnaces of several of the older vessels burning oil and coal, manes of smoky flame streamed from their redhot funnels.

Then of a sudden the thudding of a heavy quick-firing gun rebounded over the few miles of intervening sea, and almost instantly the mallet-like blows of sound greatened into a rapid and continuous firing when some of Admiral Loesch's cruisers, that were slowly falling back into station to port of his rear division, exchanged a brisk cannonade with the French scouts. And as it died away in a sputter of ominous sound on their retirement, the boom of the *Fürst Bismarck's* fore-barbette 15·5 guns broke solemnly in the air. It was then that on board the *Vengeur*, towards the centre of her storming line, in the obscurity to starboard a few feet of the upper-deck hatchway giving admittance below to the senior flagship's fore conning-tower, the French C.I.C. put down his night binoculars with a little stifled sigh of relief.

"It is so. They come in single line ahead. They cannot alter formation now. Fifteen vessels—their line, too long. It is our men who make victory or defeat now."

Yes! The enemy was attacking in column single line ahead.

Whether Admiral Loesch, confident in the crushing weight of those simple tactics so prevalent in German manœuvres, did not intend to develop the attack

on effecting his first aim—or had further movements in hand—will never be known. His was the reticence of the Commanding Officer assured of himself and absorbing strength, not inspiring it. A primary error in the German system of training.

As leading his battle-line he hurled his thundering flagship at the wide gap between the French mid-division and the port wing under Vice-Admiral Millarmard, the fore and amidships barbettes of his one-calibre (15·5-inch) battleships opened fire at 7,100 yards with their tremendous weight of metal; and the French replying in a concentrated fire of their guns bearing on the German van the mighty reports swelled into a tornado of deep thunder.

Almost in the first discharge on board the *Tonnant*, port wing vessel of the mid division, and next in line to the break in the French formation, an irregular splash of intense fire, crimson and purple, starred the dusky twilight as a 1586-pounder shell burst on the top of her fore-turret. It drove an overpowering volume of stifling fumes through the sighting hoods and the perforated top of the turret, to choke and stupefy the gun-crews; it blinded the fore-conning tower with a storm of white-hot splinters and metal dust. As the *Tonnant* drunkenly plunged to starboard she narrowly missed ramming the *Vengeur* next abreast, the projectiles from her forward 9·5-inch starboard pieces screeched across the flagship's upper-deck amidships. Then as abruptly she veered sharp to port, and regained station.

Under the blows of their own concussions the battleships rocked and reeled on the calm ocean as if in a rough seaway. From shattered funnels and ruptured gas vents, fiery-hued smoke and flame played

forth in great sheets and plumes. Wrenched and beaten apart under the tremendous hail, bows and fore-decks were crumbling and opening up into great fissures, and the stout steel upper works, punched and twisted, collapsed like sheet-iron structures into shapeless masses. Yet irresistibly the two leading units of the German van, stubbornly vomiting out flame and death, swept onwards into the gap, and under their grouped broadsides the *Tonnant* and *Indomptable* to their port and starboard were beaten into reeling hulks and gaping hulks, the latter leaning almost instantly down on her tattered side, slowly to turn turtle. To a deafening rumble the *Tonnant's* suction-gas compressers fired, and broke her great hull asunder into a fountain of dazzling flame.

But already Vice-Admiral Millarmard with the remaining four vessels of the port wing division was standing in succession sixteen points to port, to come up to starboard of the *Fürst Bismarck* and *Friedrich-Wilhelm IV*, now raking the sterns of the mid-division.

Steadily, swiftly, the French mid and starboard wing battleships veered in answer to the electric transmitters crackling and flashing in the wireless cabin deep beneath the *Vengeur's* armoured deck, as on the receiver dials of their steering gear the index magnets swung to—'Sixteen points. Port helm.' Their broadside fire now enveloped the *Fürst Bismarck* and her consort, and delivered by their port batteries of 9·5-inch quickfirers it effected appalling damage on German gun crews.

It was thus the Frenchmen made for victory. The traditions of more than one Navy may have been moulded by Trafalgar. In the mêlée ensuing on De Pelley coming down on the German line ahead to

throw it into disorder, the overwhelming rapidity of his secondary armament's fire on targets that could not be missed turned the enemy's barbettes into loathsome shambles. Under the storm of high explosive 317-pounder shells breaking on gun muzzle and gun port, on breastwork, and shattered sighting hoods and ventilating tops, the gun-crews were killed and disabled faster than fresh relays could take their posts. The interiors of the barbettes in time became unworkable owing to the density of the gassy fumes. Human pulp fouled the loading trays and human bodies hashed and mangled, disembowelled and trunkless, choked the gun platforms and levers and turn-table hatchways.

Of the furious engagement now following, it is not possible to trace the complicated movements and their details. Though it is clear that the *Fürst Bismarck* and consort did turn eight points to port on breaking the line to rake the rear of the remaining French formation, with Vice-Admiral Millarmard still thundering at them to their starboard.

From that time till the engagement died down each vessel was manœuvred as the surviving officer commanding her could best effect.

Belching vessels passed each other continually at close range, 1567-pounder projectiles bursting in 11-inch E.C. steel armour and protection bulkheads like tin-plate, and rending girders and armoured supports till—as in the *Danton*, *Furieux*, and *Condorcet*—barbettes, canting with their own weight, caused their turn-tables to jam in the roller paths. Others with huge cavities on their water-lines or with their bows or sterns riddled into crumpled wreckage or blown away, tilted on their wounds, and with their

freight of agonized dying and wounded, conveyed for safety beneath the armoured deck, either capsized or instantly sank. Some ramming were rammed in turn by an unexpected consort of their antagonist. Others made use of their underwater torpedo tubes, and if the weapons missed the particular target they hit friend as well as foe.

Only through lack of projectiles on both sides did the action cease, and men awoke from their delirium of slaughter and death to realize the early morning sun was shining bright and peacefully, illuming the vast bank of battle smoke with a dull grey glimmer like gloaming.

As the light increased Admiral Baron von Rottenstein, Second-in-Command, on becoming aware of the loss of the *Fürst Bismarck* and the C.I.C., through the *Bayern* having picked up some survivors, collected the seaworthy Germans in his vicinity—seven in number—the *Bulow* and *Germania* burning fiercely. At ten knots he trailed off to the south-west, whither Admiral de Pelley followed him, having transferred his flag to the battered but seaworthy *Democritie*, the *Vengeur* taking a steep list to port—and while temporary repairs were being effected on the eight battleworthy units about him.

Of the remaining German battleships, the *Stettin*, *Dantzic* and *Kronprinz Wilhelm* (the latter with the British steamer, *Albion*, standing by her), crawled into Lagos Roads; while it was the *Kaiserin Elizabeth* that, after a stubborn effort of resistance, was jackalled into surrender just on the border of territorial waters off the Tagus, by the van cruisers of the British 2nd cruisers, scouting some eighty miles ahead of their squadron. The fate of her other consorts may be surmised.

It was the fate of the *Danton*, *Furieux*, *Condorcet* and *Voltaire*. They in the mêlée had gone to the bottom, the Tricolour still flying above their blood-stained, shuddering hulls.

There are no horrors so awful, so undescribable by the sane, as those perpetrated by man against his fellow man during naval hostilities.

§ 7

Paris went mad with joy, and towards evening broke out into brilliant illuminations and extravagant gaieties that found echoes everywhere in the Departments of France. That, though She was now fallen from her century-long status as the second Great Naval Power, her gallant Admiral had defeated the main battle-fleet of Germany—now equal in status of naval power to Great Britain—was affirmed by all patriots.

Firebrands and irresponsible demagogues intoxicated by their country's triumphs on land and sea advocated the strenuous prosecution of hostilities. In their eyes France was once more assuming the Dictatorship of Western and Mid-Europe and all the glories of the Napoleonic Era were returning upon her. But her workers for the most remained quiet yet rejoicing. The leaders of her well-organized democracy had already launched their attack on World Militarism.

Already their request for an armistice to be arranged had been presented to their Government, together with the alternative of a general strike. That forenoon sections of artisans had been withdrawn from the State arsenals in demonstration of the reality of their intentions.

And in Germany the national gloom had deepened.

Few but the most sanguine had hopes of Admiral Baron von Rottenstein reaching Sta. Cruz to refit under the protection of the guns of that costly and most laboriously created naval base at Friedrichstad. When on the morning of July 4 the Kaiser returned to Berlin at the urgent request of his harassed Government, the death-like silence in the dense crowds on both sides Unter den Linden, and in front of the Imperial Palace, must have struck home to him.

There might be more at stake than the lives of the commonality.

On that very balcony there—it now held the eyes of the sullen democrats thronging before the grey walls of his palace—his forbear, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, had had to salute in humiliation the victims of the Revolution of March 19, 1849.

CHAPTER VII

BY LABOUR'S COMMAND

AND in Britain? It was there the decisive words were spoken, voicing the irresistible force of organized democracy—this new power which, if not guided in love of liberty and prudence, may so tyrannously supersede every other with the result that inevitable and terrible reaction will set in and put the clock of higher civilization far back.

Even before the actual outbreak of hostilities with Japan and Germany the social democratic party in Great Britain and Ireland were successfully approaching the heads of Trades Unionism, bulking largely in the National-Labour majority, to combine in an open agitation against war. And it was the so-called 'betrayal' by Mr. Marlborough of his Government that in the main had enabled them successfully to capture and set in motion the machinery of organized labour. Already, towards the end of June, at the more virulent centres of the Social Democrats—in particular, throughout the Midlands—its adherents in various trades had gone out on strike against the military operations; and in different parts of the country antagonistic feelings were now being openly displayed.

'Militarists' and 'Anti-Militarists.' These words in reality indicated less the intensity of feeling arising

out of the war-question than from the classes' growing resistance to the constant pressure of the masses' far-reaching demands during the last decade. In Manchester, Bradford and Salford, meetings of both sides concerning the war had more or less come in conflict, necessitating much urgent vigour on the part of the police.

The Administration of Sir Francis Smythe had much to deepen their perplexities in the difficult task of guiding the war-battered Vessel of State. The dangers attacking Britain Overseas had developed a more paralyzing danger at home.

§ I

U. S. PACIFIC FLEET SIGHTED.

DRACHENSTEIN RETIRES.

HAS

FRANCE CEASED THE OFFENSIVE ?

DE PELLEY'S DESPATCH.

In the *Suffrage* editor-in-chief's room, these contents of the newsbill of the 6 p.m. edition, July 4, were causing some discussion. Miss Savill had knit her brows in disapproval as she glanced at them.

"Very tame! Mr. Giddens," she remarked to the head-line editor, displaying the damp proof to her. "Better knock out the third, and put 'Perth on the Defensive' or, better, 'Japs Close on Perth'; and, instead of the second—'But Britain's Battle fleet' together with a dash and 'scare' query-mark."

"'Has France Ceased the Offensive?'" repeated the sub-editor laying the sheet down on the ledge of the

great roller-desk, to gaze ponderingly at the line. "But I had in mind that rumour this morning from Petersburg about Italy and Russia having proposed an armistice. I'll knock it out, though, Miss Savill, and put——"

"I'm wrong, Mr. Giddens," interrupted Miss Savill, suddenly wheeling round on her swivel-chair. "The news-room to ring up Askew at Westminster and find out if Mr. Holyoke has had an interview with the Premier this afternoon at the House, before Cabinet met, after the Select Committee on Foreign and Home Affairs finished for to-day. If he has, I say *if* he has, our newsbill is 'Labour World Strike against the War.'"

The head-line editor stared at her wide-eyed, trying to follow the workings of her mind. Suddenly they came to him.

"No!" he uttered abruptly in amazement, snatching up his newsbill,

"Yes," she breathed defiantly, "we'll risk it. The whole thing is plain. You can hold back the paper five minutes if necessary. . . . Tell Mr. Ferris to bring me all to-day's and yesterday's foreign strike wires and the United States labour news. I want Mr. Clitheroe, too, . . . an extra-special leader on it."

"We can't have peace. The Japs are licking us hands down," grunted Giddens to himself as he hurriedly made along the tessellated passage towards the foreign-news room.

But in the height of his patriotism he had forgotten that as 'finer humanity' ascends the so-called higher plane of civilization it elects to abase that earthy spirit in order to make the whole world its home.

The Golden Age—the Millennium—that mirage of the soul's infancy, has always deluded mankind.

Miss Savill paused for a second or two as she reached across the desk for some galleys of Australian and Tokio news bearing on the impending strikes, even where the war fever had waxed hottest. The glow of excitement went from her finely chiselled features. A thought had come to her of the one Leader who might have judiciously swayed the perilous situation now arising at home, even if by one of those temporary expedients in which he of later years had proved such a precocious adept.

"I wonder how Mr. Marlborough would have juggled with it all?" she asked herself. " . . . The nobler path, his—in the end at Winsted. . . . Ah . . . father. . . ."

Across the strong grave face—already showing a semblance of years that belied the wavy deep brown tresses arranged with an air of coquettishness, so womanly—passed a spasm of grief that blanched it still paler against the deep mourning in which she was dressed. But hearing the quick footsteps of Ferris, Miss Savill resolutely controlled herself.

The foreign-news editor deposited the bulky mass of 'strike' wires on the desk by her side, but the one he had been just perusing he kept in his hand.

He pointed to the topmost flimsy, to attract Miss Savill's attention. "Chicago office wires at 10.41 a.m. 'Bomb outrages at tunnel intersections, Dearborn and State Streets, on Illinois Tunnel Coy.'s system. Work of strikers. Sixty-one men killed, ten wounded, missing unknown. The whole system held up and the city terrorized.' The Non-Militarists there are testifying."

"Yes! We haven't got just that length. . . . The more rabid of the Democratic Labourites there beginning to demonstrate," exclaimed Miss Savill drily. "Clitheroe now has a capital opening sensation for his leader. What have you there?"

Ferris gave a sarcastic chuckle. "Lloyds has just sent it out. Their agent at Punta Arenas reports the States' Atlantic Fleet is hung up there till the colliers from Monto Video, Buenos Ayres, Lota and Coronel, come along in sufficient number. Our Atlantic fleet was wise to go eastward."

But his editress had not heard him, for as the whistle of the news-room speaking-tube had shrilled out she had promptly glued its bell-mouthed receiver to her ear.

It was just then a sudden burst of eager voices rang in the corridor, and some one came running down it excitedly crying, "Miss Savill, Miss Savill . . . Mr. Ferris."

The *Suffrage* editress sat still, already engrossed in the news being sent downstairs from the wirelessed and telephoned news-room. But Ferris rushed to the door, almost capsizing his assistant as he flung it open.

"We've whopped them sir, we've whopped them," he panted, in his shock of excitement and all careless of other ears. "Here's Stannard's wires from Macassar."

With a stifled cry, Ferris snatched at the slips of decoded matter held out to him; he shot a look down the passage where some doors stood ajar and some wide open, and press messengers were flitting about.

"The commissionaires, Macdonald, to shut the inner grilles, back and front entrances. Nobody

to get out without an O K," he rasped; "I reckon we've beat the Sydney scoop. . . . It's victory, Miss Savill. . . . Glorious news!"

But she, sitting with her back to him and busy with thoughts as news of far-reaching importance poured into her ear, had not grasped the meaning of his words.

"Yes . . . news, Mr. Ferris. Askew reports Mr. Holyoke has not only seen the Premier but the Cabinet meeting is postponed till the Premier and Foreign Secretary come back from Buckingham Palace. There have been a constant stream of messengers again, to-day, between the Palace and Downing Street and the Foreign Office. The Russian Ambassador has just paid a second visit to the Foreign Office. Italian Embassy won't say anything about an armistice having been mooted. . . . No more news, Mr. Callaghan? . . . Thank you. . . ."

"Read, read," cried Ferris impetuously, and as she re-stoppled the speaking tube he thrust the code-slips under her eyes.

Miss Savill's face flushed and paled. Taken with sudden excitement, exultation, she gave a little hysterical laugh, but the next moment had forced herself to remain calm.

"Thank God, there may be no more losses," she breathed so softly that the faithful henchman at her side hardly heard her words. "England can have peace with honour, and America, too. . . . Yes, the special on the strikes must go out—the 'breakdown' machines, both sets, for the war-special. . . . The Admiralty? No, we don't communicate with them till after the news is on the machines. Stannard can't be wrong."

Just then the carrier of the pneumatic tube from the

news-room upstairs shot into its receiver by the side of the table; and as its bell rang out Ferris darted forward, and grabbed the bundle of slips crushed into it.

The next instant he was madly waving them in the air. In vain he tried to speak. Excitement, elation, suffocated him.

Miss Savill, half-rising to her feet, snatched away the slips.

"By heavens, by heavens," the foreign-news editor stuttered, bending over them with her, "Stannard's licked them all, and we'll lick every paper in the universe. It's a follow-on in details, if it's all there."

The *Suffrage* had first published news of the Sydney Disaster, the forerunner of world hostilities; it was now about to issue the first news of Japanese naval defeat—that prelude to the general armistice.

Symptoms of forthcoming internecine strife on the part of Socialism and Labour were not confined to the 'white' races!

§ 2

When at 6.38 p.m., on the huge news-recorder filling the lower east side of the *Suffrage* buildings there suddenly appeared the catch-lines—'ANGLO-SAXONS WHIP THE YELLOW MEN,' 'JAPANESE CRUSHED IN THE JAVA SEA. THEY RETREAT NORTHWARD. HOW OUR HEROES DIE,'—for a moment or so, the groups of onlookers stared incredulously at them. Then came a burst of wild and delirious cheering from many throats, to swell into a vast volume of hurrahing causing a hurry-scurry from side-streets, alleys, courts and further thoroughfares.

In a twinkling of an eye the traffic became blocked

between Ludgate Hill and Fetter Lane, and remained thus till 10.30 or so with the long strings of vehicles jammed tight by the overwhelming throngs, that cheering, gesticulating, questioning—mad with joy and exultation—seethed about the newspaper offices.

In the other main arteries of London traffic was suspended and the police were helpless amidst the populace's demonstrations of frantic joy. An immense but orderly crowd despite the endeavours of the authorities assembled before Buckingham Palace and thundered out 'Rule, Britannia,' and 'God Save the King.'

Yet the *Suffrage* was not being sold on the streets westward till long past 7 o'clock. The distributing cars and automobiles, on trying to make their way along Shoe Lane with their heavy loads for the news kiosks and other destinations, had promptly been laid hands on by the crowds and despoiled of their many thousands of copies. Men wrangled and fought to get a look at the news; many were hurt and crushed in the ceaseless press, and for the time being could not be succoured by the ambulance. It is related, too, that the copies of the great journal requested by telephone for Buckingham Palace and Marlborough House, together with that used by Sir Francis Smythe for the House of Commons' information, previous to the Admiralty's confirmation at 7.15, had to be thrown from the balcony of the reporters' room in the *Suffrage* building, across Fleet Street into an upper window of No. 85, whence they were sent by messengers.

§ 3

From the London *Suffrage*, July 4, 1920. 4th Extra-Special-War Edition.

TERRIFIC DEFEAT.

JAPANESE FLEET CRUSHED.

AWFUL SCENES.

LEARY COMES TO OUR RESCUE.

(*From Our Chief War-Correspondent in the Far East.*)

MACASSAR, 9.25, *July* 4.

Japanese Main Fleet defeated, 189 miles, ESE, Point Leyken. Five Japanese vessels sunk, nine disabled and sinking. Remainder in flight, Macassar Straits. Leary with Anglo-American squadron pursuing.

British losses very heavy. Fighting terrible, mostly at long-distance range. . . .

Remainder of cablegram delivered incomplete and disarranged. Ed. *Suffrage.*

[This news from a source of indubitable caution and trustworthiness tells that the Japanese main fleet has suffered irretrievable defeat and is stubbornly retreating. In Kuropatkin's historic phrase Admiral Osamata, if he is alive, is 'advancing backwards' up the Macassar Straits to that 'certain' place, surmised in the Sulu Archipelago, where he has established a temporary base. But in his rear still thunder the guns of Admiral Leary's squadron composed, we safely surmise, of our surviving battleworthy vessels and those of the U.S.A.'s East Pacific squadron. This force of ten battleships and four cruisers—of which there has been no word since it took in fresh stores at Port San Luis d'Apra, Guam, must have come suddenly on the scene, from the NE, out of the banks of fog

and blinding squalls to which the Moluccas are subjected at this season.

The remainder of this epoch-making message from our correspondent, who alone of the press corps out East appears to have diagnosed the real zone of naval hostilities, is yet fragmentary and inchoate, up to the minute we go to press. It gives us however the material for reconstructing something of the stupendous conflict.

Seeking the Foe.

Sir John Byng, C.I.C., of our first battle fleet, and Admiral Leary commanding U.S. East Pacific squadron, by means of etheric telegraphy must have determined the same course of action. To run no risk of being cooped up respectively at their bases, Singapore and Cavite, while further refitting, but forthwith to seek out the powerful Japanese fleet, itself operating at a far distance from any permanent base—it has been this bold front which has brought not disaster but unparalleled victory.

Osamata's position, hitherto enveloped in uncertainty, has undoubtedly been governed as much by the necessity of protecting the military communications of Japan Australia-ward as by his intention to strike his antagonists in turn before they could have united their forces. But astutely has the great U.S.A. Commander utilized the intricacies of the Moluccas Archipelago to mislead the Japanese cruisers.

How the Battle Opened.

About midday, it seems, the great fleets of monster battleships, protected by 10 to 12 inch steel armour, and their 15.5-inch guns, opened the engagement

205 miles off Point Leyken, the most SW point of the Celebes.

At 9,500 yards distant the Japanese battle-line, eighteen vessels in column line a head, came down, ESE, their great guns slowly, deliberately roaring out as they bore on the British van, its fourteen units holding onward N-by-E in double column lines ahead.

THE FIRST MOVES.

On board the *Trafalgar*, flagship of the British Commander-in Chief, Osamata's design forthwith to cross the British T must have been immediately discerned. To her signals, the second British division under Vice-Admiral Cunningham now inclined to the NNW, while the first division increasing speed by three knots swung into the NE, to bring its full weight of grouped broadside fire on the Japanese van, yet distant 8,000 yards. Infinitesimal targets to the naked eye, yet full and plain to the keen-eyed officers examining them from the fire-control stations on the bulky tripod and unical masts.

So all too swiftly must the mighty booming of the 15·5-inch batteries have swelled into terrible diapasons as over the miles of azure sea the antagonists hurled death and destruction at each other.

AMIDST BURSTING SHELL AND BLINDING PROJECTILE.

Over and against the colossal battleships there burst, not in a tornado but in a steady, ceaseless downfall—the very insistence of the shocks paralyzing on the nervous systems of combatants—tons of metal flashing into white-heat on impact; the Japanese 'Shimosi' shells, those 'portmanteaux' once pulverizing and battering the Russians to their doom, were pulping

and shattering many a gun-crew in British barbettes, early this morning. Speedily on both sides fire-control stations must have become wrecked by exploding shell or hurled into ten thousand fragments ; masts began to cant and toppled as the steel forts beneath staggered and rocked under the concussions of gun and erupting projectile, and funnels and gas vents grew riddled and tattered.

The great elliptical smokestack of the *Howe* (second in the van of our second division now coming up, 6,400 yards distant off the enemy's starboard bow) was observed 'collapsing like tin-plate,' struck apparently by a plump of shells, and out of the gap burst a vast plume of smoke and flame enveloping the port barbette already smothered in the wreckage. Men would be suffocated, roasted alive, in that steel gun-house already choked with dead and dying. And the case of the *Howe* was but 'one of many.'

How We Fight Nowadays.

In this battle, much more than in the China Fleet Disaster, or in the North Sea engagements and that victory, which began off the Gettysburg Bank, there is striking evidence of the great change in modern naval hostilities.

In the tactics of 1920 we find that same deliberation and aloofness of combat first shown in the Manchurian Campaign War 1904–5, and so signally in the Millionenschlacht fought out so recently along the heights of Remoncourt and Valleroy. This has been brought about by the magnitude of the warships and their armaments, and, too, the number of units brought into the fighting line of the modern battle-fleet.

THE SECOND MOVES.

The first British division was still standing NE in regular formation, and soon about to cross Osamata's bellowing van, now 5,600 yards away. To evade the raking fire of Byng's broadsides the Japanese stood eight points to port and appear to have quickened their speed, so as to assume not only a parallel course but ultimately envelop our first division.

On board the lurching *Trafalgar*, the after starboard barbette had 'ceased firing, its gun-port to port blown in and twisted', leaving a huge cavity for the entrance of the myriad showers of splinters and metal chips torn from the ruptured deck, and rendering the barbette untenable. The great 'bows and forecastle were twisted and torn open' and the officers' quarters on fire. But behind the clanging walls of the armoured redoubt or conning tower between her fore-barbette and jagged gas-vent, the "Brain of the fleet" was still intact and responsive.

The first British division edged in on the enemy, thus reducing the ranges.

Its terrific blows from concentrated broadsides striking the *Nikawa* and *Tsushima* literally wrenched their structure apart; and great fissures gaped open to the water-line.

The *Nikawa*, 'slanting steep' on her shattered shoulder ceased firing and staggered away to port, out of the fight, but the *Tsushima*, her fore gas-compressor struck by an A-P projectile bursting through the protection deck, just abaft number three bulkhead went sky-high in a vast cloud of brownish smoke and flame.

LEARY TO THE RESCUE.

The engagement at this period seems to have resolved itself into two separate fights.

(1) In the NNE, Byng's division, much battered and still preserving formation—though its centre unit the *Benbow* had swerved wide to starboard and cut something like the figure eight before she was got under control again—seeking to avoid having its T crossed by Osamata's first division. (2) In the rear, some 4,800 yards to the south, the enemy's second division, under Vice-Admiral Komatori, standing SSE, almost parallel with, and two miles distant of our second division.

It was just then Admiral Leary's guns apparently first boomed out. Coming at full speed out of the NE by N, the first U.S.A. Pacific squadron was rapidly opening fire as its units bore down across the van of the Japanese first division now in some disorder. The modern U.S.A. battleships' much discussed armament of 12 and 10 inch guns in their superimposed turrets must have gouted forth their weight of high-explosive shell with appalling effect on the barbettes and shattered hulls of the enemy.]

§ 4

The guns of this inevitable engagement in Eastern waters were the last to thunder out in the hostilities of 1920.

Whether or not the tentative proposals put forth by Russia and Italy for a general armistice could have been entertained by all the combatants with due regard to their national honour, that which was vaster and infinitely more potent than defeat and

victory had already compelled the immediate arrest of hostilities. It was the impending strike throughout the world against militarism, and much that militarism sustains in the present structure of civilization.

Already on July 3, France, quick to recognize the dangers, had not only ceased to act on the offensive but had done much to persuade Belgium to stand upon her arms, while Holland but occupied her lands again as they were evacuated by von Drachenstein, and ceased any military enterprise against him.

In Great Britain, the rapid spreading of local strikes and disorders compelled the Government to decide promptly; and when on the evening of July 6, it was announced in the Houses of Parliament that Britain. likewise France and America, had agreed to accept the good offices of Russia and Italy to the end that a general armistice be duly entered into, to the end that peace be ultimately arranged, such a course was felt to have become inevitable. Japan Herself had pointed the way in proffering a four days' truce to the Government of West Australia for their consideration of the terms of the ransom of Perth, and their submission to the British Government, before engaging in the attack on the weak defences in her outlying suburbs.

It was, too, her curiously generous act in landing the U.S.A. volunteers captured by her second-class cruisers *Yokohama*, *Asama* and *Togasi* in the *British King*, *British Queen*, *San Diego* and the *Republic of Chili*, on the Namouito Islands, with a sufficiency of stores to last them till succour arrived from San Luis d'Apra, that came home to the warm heart of the American nation.

Not for innumerable months were the terms of

peace to be concluded—terms, in which, it may be said, were included the cession of Alsace-Lorraine to France; the payment of an indemnity by Germany to Holland, reimbursing her for the damages and expenses caused by the hostilities; and the presentation of claims and cases by Japan, the United States of America, Great Britain and the Commonwealth of Australia to the Court of adjudication at the Hague.

§ 5

Out of the brief but worldwide struggle there was created in Britain and the Empire at large a drawing together of classes, interests and parties, in the common feeling that an exceeding peril had been averted.

But, too, the World's Awakening had come.

Throughout the nations of the East and the West the sense had quickened and burst into knowledge that a new power had arisen in the determination of the workers to paralyze mere aggressive war and the growth of militarism. No longer were personal ambitions to plunge nations into war. No longer could a Government use it as a step in a political game or State gamble in State destinies. War now became only possible when the people could be made to feel that a vital interest worth the sacrifice was at stake.

The Great Awakening had come. Labour was now conscious of its brawn and thews.

Again was Mr. Marlborough to tell himself, 'All will be well.' Yet, perhaps, it was Lesley Savill and Isobel Stellman who could have told him Life's great and essential secret.

FINIS

Butler and Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London

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